

№58

GLOWS in the DARK

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GENDER part 01

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—Todd Taylor

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PODCASTS/RECORDS/LIVE REVIEWS/TONS OF OTHER DUMB STUFF

The Hills, The Hills, The Hills

I have one real talent in life. I wish it was a marketable skill. Give me any object, any system, and I can break it.

One of my earliest childhood memories is taking a commercial touting the indestructibility of metal trucks a little too seriously. Although my brother and I were rightly impressed that the yellow dump truck still worked after being thrown off the roof, it was no match against a station wagon. We'd disguised the truck by putting it into a paper bag. And, sure, it was a little unfair to put it on a blind curve. But, man, that thing sparked for a good four hundred meters before it clattered off the rear transaxle.

Still, my brother and I were a little disillusioned that we'd broken our toy beyond repair. The TV had promised "indestructible."

At five, I had half an unusable dump truck and figured out the television wasn't telling me real things. It's something that many people have never learned.

I've been getting more and more into bicycle repair over the last year. No gasoline to explode. No electricity to knock me out. There's something appealing about simple mechanics with infinite variety, about human hearts and muscles acting as engines. In a world that doesn't make a lot of sense a lot of the time, I'll take whatever I can, even if it's Newtonian physics, brakes and cables, or a great new Shang-A-Lang song ringing in my head long after the album's finished.

Highland Park, the Los Angeles neighborhood I live in, is wrinkly. From above it looks like a blanket over some pretty big lumps.

Although rich people make me nervous, I take full advantage of their sense of paranoia and entitlement when it comes to street maintenance. Close by, in certain parts of Pasadena, are wide, clear, cleaned streets with hardly anyone on them except landscapers and the occasional dog walker. Many of the streets are canopied by trees. It's fuckin' pleasant and it's hilly. It's great for riding and not being in the dogfight of L.A. traffic.

Several months ago, with help from the Bike Oven, a local bike co-op, and advice from Charles, my dad's friend who helps keep my dad out of trouble and on the road—I geared my bike for the hills. I didn't rush the job. I made sure all the parts were compatible. It took a couple months to get everything exact. Short test runs. Minor adjustments. No forcing of parts.

On a Saturday, I rode up hill after hill. The bike ran well. I'd learned something new and I was riding around on this new information. I could see downtown L.A. from up above.

On the following Monday, I heard the smallest of pings. I knew it couldn't be good.

My rear derailleur had pretzeled around my rear gears and snapped my frame. At the time, I only suspected how bad it was. Two weeks of investigation later, I had "perfect storm" my bike past its twenty-year-old frame's capability. I'd done nothing wrong. I'd just superseded its design. I just have that knack.

Hands greasy, mind trying to figure out if I could ride home on one gear, hunched over to several inches off the ground, angry at myself for not bringing any tools, a man walked up to me.

"Hey, you got a lighter?"

I flared my blackened hands out to him, looked at him, and said, "I'm having a very bad day."

"Gotta cigarette?"

* * *

A couple months passed.

I learned a whole bunch more about bike repair, dealt with the grief of a good idea snapping, and resuscitated an older frame, part by part.

Yesterday, I started back on those hills.

—Todd Taylor

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"It is true that we are weak and sick and ugly and quarrelsome but if that is all we ever were, we would millenniums ago have disappeared from the face of the earth."

—John Steinbeck, *East of Eden*

This issue is dedicated to the memories of Stiff and Derf Scratch.



Junk food makes the brain grow. Walter Bowie gnaws on a *Razorcake* back issue. Mmmmmmm.

THANK YOU: Let's do some bragging on his behalf. Jason Willis makes other graphic designers look like doofs. He's a magician, but the cover really doesn't glow in the dark, ding dong; Canderson, your eye, composition, and timing are immaculate. It makes Mark Sultan look like he can see well into the future; Why hasn't anyone invented the "drunk job" yet? thanks to Brad Beshaw for his illo. in Sean's column; Sobriety'll bring out the drug stories like no one's business thanks to Craig Horky for his illo. in Jim's column; Nation of Amanda goes two pages in a row thanks to for her illo. in Amy's column and water coloring Mitch's column; Bureaucracy really is a three-eyed slug scorpion with a Bowie knife for a tail thanks to Ryan Gelatin for his illo. in Norb's column; Yes, you could once buy an entire house from a mailorder catalog thanks to Bill Pinkel for his illo. in the Rhythm Chicken's column; Werewolf hates drywall. Chew! Scratch! Hole! thanks to Jackie Rusted for her illo. in Dale's column; The Neighborhood Watch icon always looked more like international espionage than someone stealing a stereo thanks to Marcos Siref for his illo. in Gary's column and his new "pizza and dynamite" Razorcake sticker design; No one should have to write obituaries thanks to Dave Disorder, Walter Rossmann, and Tim Hubbard for the Stiff remembrance; "Wait, wait, I think I've heard of that band. No, not the Ramones. Oh, yeah. PiL," thanks to Nardvuur, Bev Davies, and Lauren Measure for the John Lydon/Rotten interview, photos, and layout; If you fart in a snowsuit and nobody hears it, is it still a fart? Of course it is (unless it's really a fart) thanks to Aphid Peewit, Fangs, AJ Olmscheid, and Keith Rosson for the Hamburger Help Me interview, photos, and layout; "She was a girl from Birmingham/ She just had an abortion/ Body I'm not an animal" thanks to Aesop Dekker, Featherbottom, Josie Simio, Peggy Nolan, and Melita for the Creamy 'Lectric Santa interview, collages, and photos; Oh crap. Creamy 'Lectric Santa, not the Sex Pistols; More things should be like "fucking and chewing gum at the same time" thanks to Ryan Leach, Canderson, and Ben Pobjoy for the Mark Sultan interview and photos; I always thought the kid was just a prop thanks to Jimmy Alvarado, Alex Cvetovich, and Alan M. Thewlis for the Nervous Gender interview, transcription, and photos; 41,245 words of thanks to the following record, book, DVD, and zine reviewers: Ryan Leach, Corinne, The Lord Kveludulfr, Ian Wise, Chris Peigler, Joe Evans III, Sean Koepenick, Dave Williams, Rene Navarro, Matt Average, Juan Espinosa, Adrian Salas, Ty Stranglehold, Keith Rosson, Bryan Static, MP Johnson, Donhasabigrecollection, Art Ettinger, Kristen K, Jake Shut, CT Terry, Jimmy Alvarado, Lisa Weiss, Norb, Kurt Morris, Kevin Dunn, Garrett Barnwell, Andy Conway, Lauren Trout, Craven Rock, Steve Hart, and Noah WK; Chris Baxter keeps wrecking cars, buying old ones, and fixing 'em up pretty. We thank him for his Photoshop wizardry; Werd Whizerds pudding it together pretty thanx to Kari Hamaoka, Megan Pants, Adrian Salas, Vince Battilana, Josh Rosa, and Josh Robles for their proofing and editing; Social networking rodeo thanks to Jeff Proctor and Samantha Beerhouse; The following folks stepped over the threshold at HQ, have put considerable effort into this issue and are keeping Razorcake healthy: Matt Braun, Julia Smut, Alex Cvetovich, Josh Rosa, Josh Robles, Samantha Beerhouse, Ever Velazquez, Ian Burris, Mary Clare Stevens, Juan Espinosa, Adrian Tenney, Adrian Salas, and Joe Dana.

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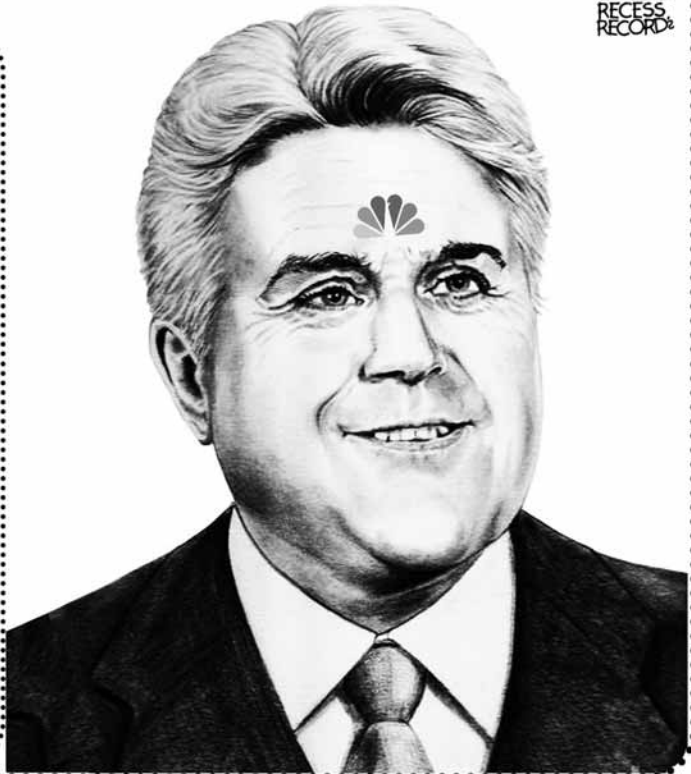
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"A sad soul can kill quicker than a germ." -John Steinbeck, *Travels with Charley*



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A MONKEY TO RIDE THE DOG

SEAN CARSWELL

"Most of my money is spent on getting by rather than on exciting purchases."

BANNER PILOT IN BEVERLY HILLS

I headed west on Sunset Boulevard, straight into the heart of Beverly Hills. The motor on my truck's air-conditioner had just gone out. I needed some music that would sound good through the rush of air and the roar of traffic, so I popped in a Banner Pilot CD. Banner Pilot—with all their songs of working shitty jobs, getting drunk, going nowhere, not really knowing where to look to go, even—in Beverly Hills. It's an odd combination. Two weeks earlier, I'd seen Banner Pilot play. Well, not exactly in Beverly Hills, but at the Troubadour in West Hollywood, and if you stand in front of the Troubadour and sneeze in a westerly direction, your spit will land in Beverly Hills. And the thought of me—with all my stories about working shitty jobs, getting drunk, going nowhere, not really knowing where to look to go, even—in Beverly Hills, twice in two weeks, is even more odd.

So what was I doing there this second time? I'd met up in Hollywood with Jim Ruland, talked about books, picked up a couple of novels at Book Soup, and then headed west to the freeway that would take me home. A woman in a very expensive car with a very expensive haircut tailgated me, whipped around me, offered her middle finger for my viewing pleasure, and then sped off. Her bumper sticker read, "I save lives, what do you do?"

I hadn't really done anything to incur the wrath of her middle finger besides drive through Beverly Hills in my old pickup. I didn't care about that woman or her finger anyway. Banner Pilot's song "Skeleton Key" came on. I turned it up and sang along.

I like this song because it tells the story of the novel that the songwriter, Nick, wants to write. It opens with a woman who's beaten down by the weather and a man who stumbles out of a bar. It's a beautiful scene, but it's all he has. He doesn't know how it'll all play out but he knows that, in the end, she'll save him and herself. I love that idea of a novel that's only an opening scene and an ending, no more than a hundred words spent on it. As I drove through Beverly Hills, singing along and thinking about novels, I thought, I could write that book for Nick. I know what it's like to stumble out of bars and ally myself with beaten-down girls in a search for redemption. The song swears that it would have to take place in Minneapolis, but if I were to write it, it would have to take place in Cocoa Beach,

Florida because that's where I know about being lost like that. Thinking these thoughts, it occurred to me that I wrote this novel already. I called it *Train Wreck Girl*. It came out a couple of years ago on Manic D Press.

I kept thinking about Banner Pilot and books, though, because there's something kinda literary about them. At the end of side A of their album *Resignation Day*, they sample a Jack Kerouac reading. This mirrors the sample of Kerouac at the end of side A on Jawbreaker's *24-Hour Revenge Therapy*. I like Banner Pilot's sample better. Jawbreaker samples passages from Kerouac's "October in the Railroad Earth." Lonely, self-absorbed passages that match the lonely, self-absorbed songs of Jawbreaker: "the clarity of Cal to break your heart." Banner Pilot samples passages from *The Subterraneans*, from the part of the book where everything goes right before everything goes wrong: "a tableful of beers a few that is and all the gangs cutting in and out... the booming drums, the high ceiling." This sense of things going right before they go wrong is part of what I like about Banner Pilot's songs. Though Nick writes the songs, they remind me of the stories Banner Pilot bassist Nate used to write in his zine *Pick Your Poison*. Stories about working shitty jobs, getting drunk, going nowhere, not really knowing where to look to go, even. And, of course, there's Kerouac to think about, with all of his stories about working shitty jobs, getting drunk, etc.

So there I was in Beverly Hills—a city where nothing of value is produced, a city known only for its spectacle of opulence—once again thinking about class in America, thinking about one more lost generation and where it all comes from and what it adds up to. I've been reading these stories and singing along to these songs for more than twenty years, for more than half of my life. I've been writing them for about as long. Between my two trips to Beverly Hills, I even went to Flagstaff for the book release of James Jay's *The Journeymen*. It's a book of poetry about working shitty jobs, getting drunk, etc. His reading could be nowhere else but in a bar. It was packed with people who lived the lives that James Jay put into poetry. It was one of those unique literary events where the crowd spent almost as much time laughing, hooting, and hollering as James Jay spent reading, one of those unique events where this kind of behavior is welcome. Even encouraged.

With all this in the last two weeks, I drove home among the rustle and roar of the L.A. freeways wondering what conclusions I could draw from more than twenty years of reading novels and listening to songs about working shitty jobs, getting drunk, etc. Here's what I came up with.

The first question I asked was what's behind all these shitty jobs? Of course, there's the system of neoliberal capitalism and all that, but I want to stay focused on a topic small enough for this column. One of the books I've read recently that can help answer this question is Iain Levison's *How to Rob an Armored Car*. It tells the story of three guys—a manager at a Wal-Mart-type store, a cook in a corporate restaurant, and a dogwalker—who decide to enter into a life of crime. The emptiness and futility of the two corporate jobs are familiar to most *Razorcake* readers. What's interesting about the book is the dogwalker because he has dipped his toes into the American dream. He has a bachelor's degree, a wife, a child, a house with a mortgage, his own business, everything he's supposed to have. It all feels empty and insufficient to him. As I read the book, it was easy for me to root for these guys. I hoped they would take the step of getting away from the TV and actually rob an armored car. Because a quick survey of their options showed that life in twenty-first-century America can be empty and meaningless and there can be reasons for throwing it all away. Not that I want to throw it all away. I don't. I just want to understand why throwing it all away is understandable.

This is why the dogwalker was interesting to me. I recognize his relationship with money because, like him, most of my money is spent on getting by rather than on exciting purchases. I earn enough to pay my bills because I want a roof over my head and water in my pipes and electricity for the computer and record player and light at night. I don't buy much beyond that. But most jobs are only worth the ridiculous hours and chronic humiliation if you make enough money to buy shit that makes you happy. And most shit that I could buy doesn't make me happy. I get exhausted thinking about all the things I don't want to buy and don't even want in my house. Here's a short list: a cell phone, a digital camera, a new car, a suburban house, insurance, bottled water, a diamond ring, any kind of jewelry, anything that's advertised

GOING FROM
LOST TO
FOUND IS
DIFFICULT,

AND IT'S
DIFFERENT
FOR
EVERYONE.

YOU
HAVE TO
FIGURE IT
OUT FOR
YOURSELF.



BRAD BESHAW

during a football game, a blackberry, a meal at a corporate restaurant, a coke, new shoes, furniture, window treatments, clothing with logos on it, disposable cleaning products, anything sold at any big box store, anything for sale at my local mall, or anything else, really, except for a new air-conditioning motor for my truck so I can go back to traveling the freeways of L.A. bourgy-style.

So, if you're not someone who likes to buy the poorly-made, largely disposable goods that drive our economy, if you're someone who has learned that the purchase of nearly every item gives you a brief jolt of happiness followed by, at best, empty clutter and, at worst, crippling debt, then your typical job is unsatisfying and you may as well work a job that covers only the bare minimum. Whether we've articulated it this way or not, I think a lot of us have recognized this. Hence, the second part of the familiar plot: getting drunk.

But this is a real problem. For so many of us, the punishments of society (anywhere from being homeless or in jail or carrying a lot of debt) are real, but the rewards (a bluetooth, leather car seats) aren't rewarding. I wouldn't want a house in Beverly Hills even if I could afford it. My neighbors would be assholes. I prefer the junky who lives next door now. He may blast heavy metal so loudly that I have to leave my apartment until he's done, but he's not all bad. Sometimes he plays the Misfits.

Beyond leading us to getting drunk, this relationship with work and money also leads us to that feeling of being lost and not knowing where to go. There are no real easy answers to this one. It's not easy to find what you're looking for when you're not even sure what it is. I don't want to offer platitudes like *be true to yourself* or *find something you love and pursue it*. Going from lost to found is

difficult, and it's different for everyone. You have to figure it out for yourself. One way to figure it out is to write stories or songs. Another way is to listen to these stories and songs and decide what works for you and what doesn't.

For me, luckily I don't feel so lost any more. I have a pretty good job. It may not be perfect. I may not make a huge salary, but I only work thirty-two weeks a year. When I am at work, I feel like I'm doing some good for society. When I'm not at work, I can do the things that make for a richer life: hang out with friends, spend time with family, write, surf, ride my bike or my skateboard, volunteer for causes I believe in. It's not for everyone, but, for me, it's not bad. It beats being a stressed out asshole flipping off people on Sunset Boulevard or robbing an armored car, anyway.

—Sean Carswell





LAZY MICK

JIM RULAND

"Through the magic of LSD, I'd brought half a dozen classic rock songs to life."

Roommates

First we set fire to the beer boxes, the twelve-pack containers we'd flattened and kept stacked by the door. The chemicals in the cardboard gave off a black odor, or maybe it was the ink that sent up blooms of foul smoke that chased us away from the fire. We stomped on the boxes with our wet shoes and went looking for something else to burn.

It was Saturday night, and my roommates and me at Hunter's Ridge, the apartment complex where I lived my first year of college at Radford University, were all tripping on acid down at the river. Officially, four of us lived in the four-bedroom apartment on the ground floor—me, my younger brother Emmett, our friend from high school Doug, and Dave, a drug dealer from Hawaii whose neck and arms were a patchwork of skin grafts from pulling a pot of boiling water off the stove when he was a toddler. But, there was usually twice as many people staying at the Ridge: my brother's hippie girlfriend, Laura; our friend Mike who slept on the couch; and his friend Carlos who slept on a foam-cushion futon in the utility closet.

I had just gotten out of the Navy and was used to close quarters. As a veteran, I didn't have to live in a dorm. There were thirty bunks in the berthing compartment on the ship I'd called home, and in boot camp I'd had eighty roommates. Seven people was nothing. The bedrooms at the Ridge were small, but you could fit a lot of people in them if you needed to, which I discovered the time Emmett went to a Grateful Dead show to buy a sheet of acid. He came back early in the morning and stopped off at all of his friends' apartments and dorm rooms and dosed them in their sleep. I was the last to get the LSD, and by the time I woke up, most of the trippers had made it down to the Ridge to party. They all thought it would be hilarious to cram into my room and wait for me to come to. I was a true freshman, just days out of the Navy. I'd saved up my vacation and was on terminal leave. Technically speaking, I was still in the Navy when I woke up with a head full of acid to a dreadlocked kid named Little John jumping on my bed screaming, "Reveille! Reveille!" I laughed and laughed and laughed.

With seven college kids—one of them a drug dealer—in one apartment, there was always someone looking to party. Dave's customers, most of them townies, would come in through the sliding glass door that faced the parking lot all day and night. The

television was always on, and the bong was kept in the kitchen since it was the most frequently used appliance. I was probably the biggest culprit when it came to partying, but I didn't smoke pot and I hated sitting around the apartment, wasting time.

When I was in the Navy, I did my drugs on the streets of San Diego. I couldn't just kick it on the mess decks and snort speed, or hang out in the anchor windlass room frying on acid and watch the bulkheads breathe like the lungs of a great whale. (Okay, so I did a couple of times, but it was dangerous and dumb.) Instead I wandered around, rode the trolleys, and went looking for the right kind of trouble. I did stuff. One of the many culture shocks I experienced when I went to college was adjusting to the lethargy and laziness of my roommates. They'd sleep in, skip class, eat lunch, get high, watch TV, take a nap, and then get ready to party with more food, more weed, and more TV.

I was always trying to get my roommates to turn off the television and go outside. I was fascinated by the river just a few hundred yards away from the apartment complex. It was not just any river: the New River is the second oldest river in the world, second only to the Nile. And like the Nile, the New River flows backwards from south to north. The first time I took acid with my roommates I went down to the river by myself, unwisely waded across, climbed the hill on the other side to the sprawling AT&T complex, and was immediately picked up by security—a single mom with her toddler kid. Instead of driving me off the property, the security officer continued on her rounds, leaving me alone with her kid. I was dripping wet in a tie-dyed T-shirt and had a head full of acid. I suppose she was lonely. She dropped me off at the front gates and I was so new to Radford I didn't know my own phone number. I had to thumb a ride from an old-timer in a beat-up truck. He was a veteran of the Army, the Korean War I think, and we told each other stories as he drove me back to Hunter's Ridge and dropped me off in the parking lot. I burst into the living room and all my roommates were still sitting on the couch, watching television. When I told them about my *experience in the world* they all shook their heads in disbelief, convinced I was making it all up.

But now I'd succeeded in getting them all out of the apartment. Mike found a palette

down by the dumpsters and we dragged it to the river and set it on fire. The light made all these interesting shadows in the trees that lined the river, and I was struck by how beautiful it was. My brother stood on the bank, reciting generic poetry.

"As long as this river shall meander, my love for—insert your name—shall grow!"

When the palette burned out, Carlos, the quiet, unassuming guy who was living in our closet, suggested we set fire to his futon, a decision he would almost instantly regret.

Doug and I went and got it out of the closet and brought it down to the river. We gave Carlos the honors of torching his futon. Because it was one of those foam jobs, it really ignited, and the flames shot out as high as our head. Everyone started shouting. At some point, "Put it out! Put it out!" became "Put it in the river! Put it in the river!" which we did.

But the fucking thing floated.

The current took the mattress and pushed the flaming futon into the middle of the river. It was astonishing. How could something *on fire* be floating in the water, man? I just stood there and went "Whoooooaa."

It was so unbelievably gorgeous. The flames illuminated the surface of the river, the overhanging trees, the steep slope across the way, everything. A spell had been cast, lighting up this old dark place. I felt as if I was seeing something that had never been seen before, which is possible. Who else launches flaming futons down the New River in the middle of the night? Smoke on the water. Fire in the sky. Night turned into day. Through the magic of LSD, I'd brought half a dozen classic rock songs to life.

Fire is beautiful, but it is also scary. It was *beautifulscary*, which is as good a description of tripping on acid as I can think of. But we weren't seasoned firebugs; we were college kids peaking on some really good LSD. As the futon sailed into the middle of the river, the flames got higher and higher and the light was getting brighter and brighter. When it started to drift away on the current, we freaked out and did what anyone would do. We ran like hell.

I didn't want to leave, but I didn't want to get caught. I didn't want to spend a night in jail on acid. So I ran. I kept looking back, and I could see the light from the fire lighting up more of the river valley as it made its way north. I imagined people coming out of their



CRAIG HORKY

How could something on fire be floating in the water, man? I just stood there and went "Whooooaaa."

houses, stopping their cars, gawking at the strange light in the river.

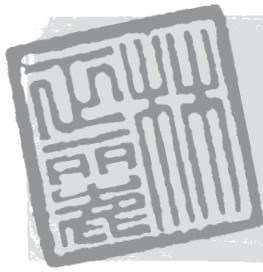
I think about that night a lot. Sometimes I think about my roommates—both official and unofficial. I have no idea where most of them are now. My brother broke up with his girlfriend and stopped going to Grateful Dead shows. Dave, Mike, and Carlos dropped out and drifted away in the current of life. I'm

Facebook friends with Doug, who I stayed in touch with all through college years later, even though he slept with my girlfriend almost immediately after we broke up.

But mostly I think about the futon, the raft of fire and light, and the way it lit up the river's invisible architecture. The light was so bright; it was like a beacon, only I didn't follow it. I went the other direction. What

would have happened if I'd *gone to the light*? Where would the current have taken me? I don't know. All I know is twenty years down the road, I've finally stopped running, and I'm working my way back to the light.

—Jim Ruland



MONSTER OF FUN

AMY ADOYZIE

**"You think you're tired
of hearing about it?
Imagine how tiresome
it is to live it."**

Our Booties, Ourselves

It's really about time.

I find myself realizing more and more often that I just don't give a fuck. It isn't the nihilistic *I believe in nuh-sing* don't-give-a-fuck, it's more the *I care not what ye thinketh* don't-give-a-fuck. This feels more genuine than all my previous fleeting don't-give-a-fuck phases because as I near the dawn of my thirtieth birthday at the end of this summer it's as if I'm too tired to care. Or perhaps I've just come to an understanding with the universe that I'm no longer going to be burdened with the seemingly ineffectual insecurities that plague me, and the universe is going to let me vent to you in 1,244 words for you here.

This revelation didn't just spring upon me; it crept up slowly like the frayed hem of my cut-off jeans. At the beginning of this summer, they began a couple inches above my knee. As the temperature rose, I began chopping off more denim until I almost neared Daisy Duke territory. The length of my cut-offs may seem irrelevant, especially since I've worn my fair yardage of miniskirts, but there's something very utilitarian and empowering about pulling on a pair of jeans shorts that's a part of my summer uniform when I've been reluctant to bare my thighs for all these years. It's what happens when your genetics decided that your thighs will touch and there isn't much that you can do about it—except maybe grow a complex because when you're in second grade you think that yours are the only chubby legs that are sticking to the desk chairs on hot afternoons in Mrs. Cisneros' class. But you only thought your legs were too big because your dad teased you saying that one day you'll inherit your mom's Rubenesque legs. Then you begin to distort your body, your brain has been wired to turn all reflective surfaces into funhouse mirrors, and your completely normal, body-weight proportionate legs have been morphed into tree trunks attached to your hips.

It only took twenty-three years after having left Mrs. Cisneros' class. It really is

about time for me to realize that all the self-imposed body criticism needs to go. But sometimes it's difficult even to acknowledge that we're tough on ourselves because we—as women involved in punk rock, and as women in general—have to navigate in a world that has become so increasingly self-aware to the point where we think we're post-gender, post-race, *post-all-the-fucked-upness-that-we're-not-really-post-anything*. It creates a space where we don't discuss these things because we're supposed to be so over it. But I'm not over it. I'm just getting to it and I don't give a fuck if you don't want to hear it because you can turn the page anytime.

There needs to be an openness for me to be completely frank and honest because it's tiresome and discouraging to hear about empowering oneself from women who seem to have an infinite supply of self-assurance. I'd be lying if I didn't admit to all the small moments of self-doubt and insecurity that I contend with often. How can we support each other if we're all so busy pretending like we're so strong that we don't get shaken? It's not cool to admit that after some twenty-odd years of being completely fine with my body, I let one snide remark from a boyfriend chip away at who I was. I can finally come to terms with it now because I've gotten over it, but it was shameful to have to admit that part of me was crushed when I playfully stuck out my small beer gut and my boyfriend's only comment was, "Gross." He's an ex now, and I'm sure he doesn't remember this moment at all—but I can still recall what I was wearing, the lighting from a small lamp in his cramped sink apartment, the way I let that comment sink into me.

It began with my legs, then my belly. And just recently, independent of remarks from a third-party, I've been really bothered with the dark fuzzy stuff on my upper lip, which is glaringly obvious to me in between waxings. (Surprisingly, I've never grown a complex about my tits because they never grew.)

Our own individual obsessions about all the little quirks that dot or bulge from our bodies may seem trivial, but they can snowball and manifest themselves in negative ways. Sometimes just knowing that you're not alone can alleviate some of the pressure. That's why I'm writing about my insecurities because if my mini-mustache can help just one other woman feel a little less worse about her own mustache then my column has done its job.

Maybe once we start talking about superficialities, then perhaps we can begin discussing other things that bug me—and maybe a few of these things may also annoy some of you, too. Like how there are some dudes who are inordinately preoccupied with sticking it in a girl's butt. Listen, if she said no the first three times to the idea of you sticking your penis in her poop-hole, you ought to just move on. I'm also fed up with how the onus is on women in terms of birth control (much respect to my vasectomized friends). If ya'll can dutifully take a pill every day, endure implants and IUDs, deal with patches and sponges—the very, very least your partner can do for you is to be mindful and acknowledge this. And consider this a PSA for the romantically impaired because this should really go without saying: Poking your boner into a girl's back is not foreplay; something is amiss if you have to be drunk to fuck; and the best sex is with someone who makes you feel completely beautiful and comfortable in your own skin.

What's sex got to do with our own perceived body images? I'm no sociologist, but the connection between a woman's self worth seems deeply intertwined with her confidence and strength in taking ownership of her sex life. I'm rather stubborn and have never been talked into doing anything I didn't feel comfortable with in bed—but I do struggle with setting boundaries—and just wanted to let other women know that it isn't a weakness but just something that we need to continually work on to stand our ground.

Consider this a PSA for the romantically- impaired:

this should really go
without saying

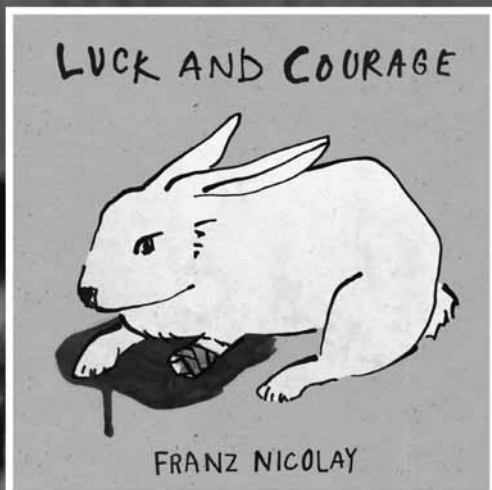
**poking your
boner into
a girl's back
is not
foreplay.**

It should be punk to dwell on all the minutiae of being a woman because women are a part of punk rock and you should care. Why don't us girls just get over it and bro-the-fuck-down? Shirts off, dudes on or whatever, right? We all own the first Bikini Kill record and there are so many bands with girls in them—and they aren't just relegated to the bass either. Is this feeling very early 1990's? Like, didn't we go through all this with riot grrrls and the third wave of feminism? You think you're tired of hearing about it? Imagine how tiresome it is to live it.

We've come a long way, but maybe we have much further to go still? I'm not asking for much, just more words and discussion. If we think there is no need because the work has been done, we're sorely mistaken and it leaves so many people feeling alone. I think I'm so frank because I need to speak these sentences out loud, for anyone to hear, hoping that it will resonate with just one other person.

—Amy Adoyzie
amyadoyzie.com



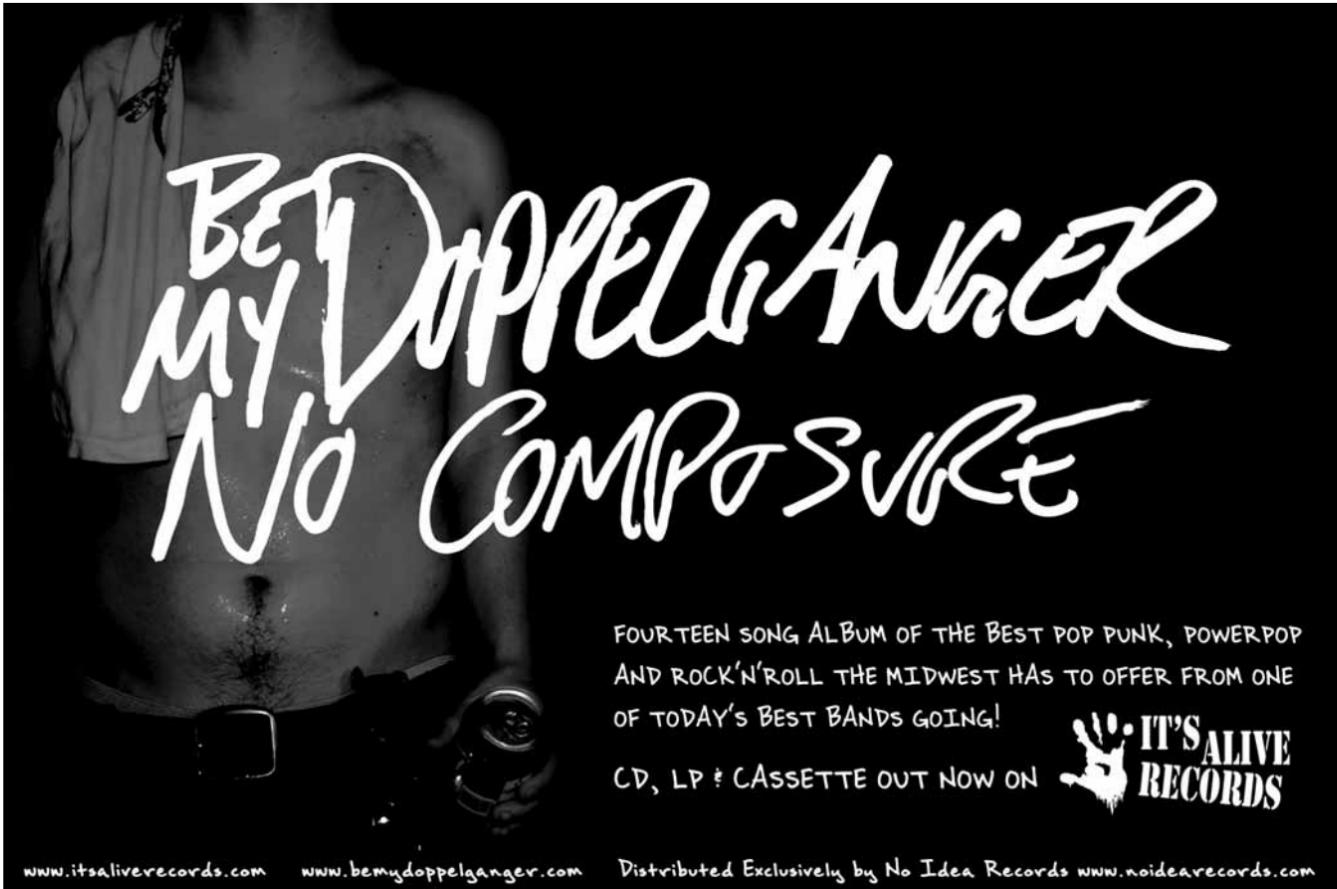


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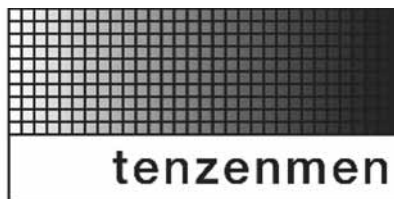
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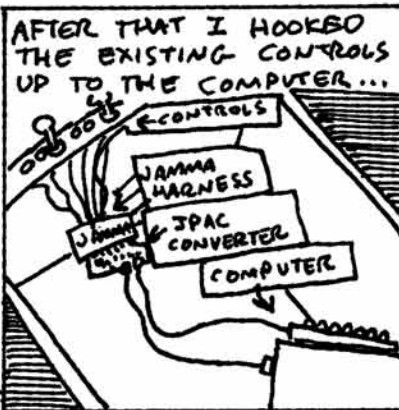
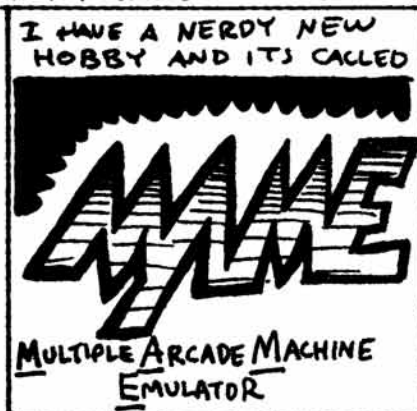
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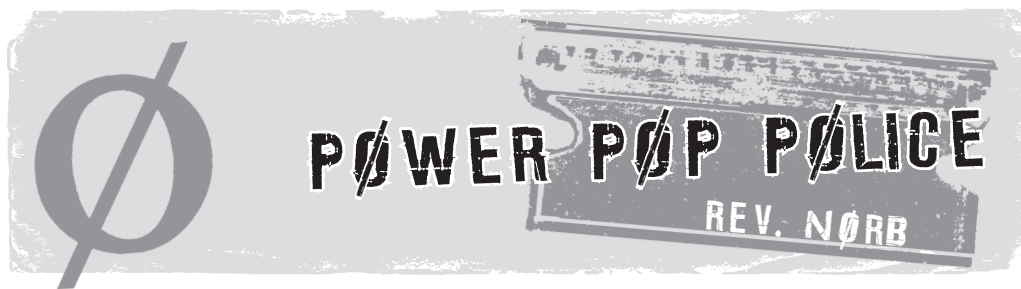
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**“Just remember—
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Tautology Club Is
The First Rule of
Tautology Club!’”**

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF THE WORLD’S CRUMMIEST STRAIGHT-EDGER

I don’t imagine anyone here has ever had to take an AODA assessment, have you? No, of course not. Me neither. And i *certainly* have never had to take two of ‘em ((i always assumed, as is right and just, that the “AOD” part of “AODA” was in reference to New Jersey’s ‘80s hardcore heartthrobs, Adrenalin O.D., and that the trailing “A” stood for “abuse” or something—so, basically, an AODA assessment was where they asked you questions to see if you’d been masturbating to the “Theme From An Imaginary Midget Western” 12” without first properly obscuring the cover, or if you were trying to work up a non-ironic alt-country version of “Surfin’ Jew” or other such crime against society. Apparently, this is not the case. The “AOD” stands for “Alcohol and Other Drugs” [[then again, didn’t AOD *always* stand for alcohol and other drugs? I recall them standing for plenty!]], and i’m not really sure what the last “A” stands for. Maybe it does indeed stand for “abuse,” or maybe it’s the “A” for “and,” tragically misplaced within the acronym for no known reason. Heck, maybe the last “A” just stands for “Assessment,” in which case the phrase “AODA Assessment” is one of those moronic tautologies like “ATM Machine” [[and, if so, just remember—“The First Rule of Tautology Club Is The First Rule of Tautology Club!”]]. Well, whatever. It has something to do with drinking. Then again, what doesn’t?). However, i have a, uh, *friend* who’s had the rarified pleasure of sitting thru one or two of these things, and, as far as i can tell, an AODA assessment is basically you paying someone a lot of money against your will, in exchange for the privilege of you getting to lie about your drinking habits to them for an hour, in hopes that they mete out the mildest possible verdict on your substance abuse history, thereby allowing you to fork out the least amount of additional dough possible ((in a situation where the dough-forking has already been tragically copious)) in order to get your drivers license back. The entire setup is doomed to failure like Mike Tyson reciting limericks: Your average punk schmuck, generally not astride the most affluent social strata to begin with, gets himself foolishly nicked for DUI—at which point in time he has to shovel greenbacks to the cops to pay off his fine, shovel additional greenbacks to his insurance company for

rate increases, shovel further additional greenbacks to the DMV for an Occupational License, and shovel a fourth veritable sand dune of greenbacks to the local Mental Health Center for the privilege of his AODA assessment ((covered previously in loving detail)). He is ready to say and do anything that will mitigate the continuance of his financial plight. Getting sent to treatment is expensive—the fiscally-prudent punker must angle for leaving their AODA assessment with the least financially cumbersome burden possible: Traffic school ((or “drunk school,” if you will, since they never really teach you anything about traffic there, other than you shouldn’t crash into it whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol)). This may seem hard to believe, kids, but being sent to Drunk School in lieu of being Treatment Bound may require a hefty dose of what a less enlightened rogue might call “lying.” One assumes that, in many cases ((though, of course, not yours or mine)) if an assessee were imprudent enough to relate the full, true, gory details of their lifetime of drug/alcohol/AOD abuse to their assessor, they’d be driving nothing higher up the vehicular food chain than a pair of roller skates for the rest of their born days, and THAT only after five years of inpatient treatment and ten years of community service. The assessor may have grand intentions for the assessee—but said assessee is in a state where they can ill afford to foot another of society’s well-intentioned bills, and must therefore lowball the piss out of their purported alcohol abuse history, lest The Drunken Truth cause additional millions to be siphoned stateward. The assessors are just doing their job, of course—so it’s hard not feel at least a pang of remorse after exiting one’s session with an ill-gotten writ of Drunk School ((although, if you try really hard, you may be able to overcome this smorgasbord of angst with the power of your mind)). Therefore, in the interests of the long-suffering AODA assessors, sitting thru a lifetime of our bullshit one hour at a crack—i have undertaken to provide herewith a comprehensive guide to patient responses at AODA assessments, and what these cryptic utterances truly mean. *No, don’t thank me! Truth is my bread! Community Service my butter!*

Q: *This is your first DUI?*

A: Yes.

TRANSLATION: If you knew about the first one, we wouldn’t be having this conversation, would we?

Q: *What were you drinking the night of your arrest?*

A: I brought a 12-pack of PBR to the party.

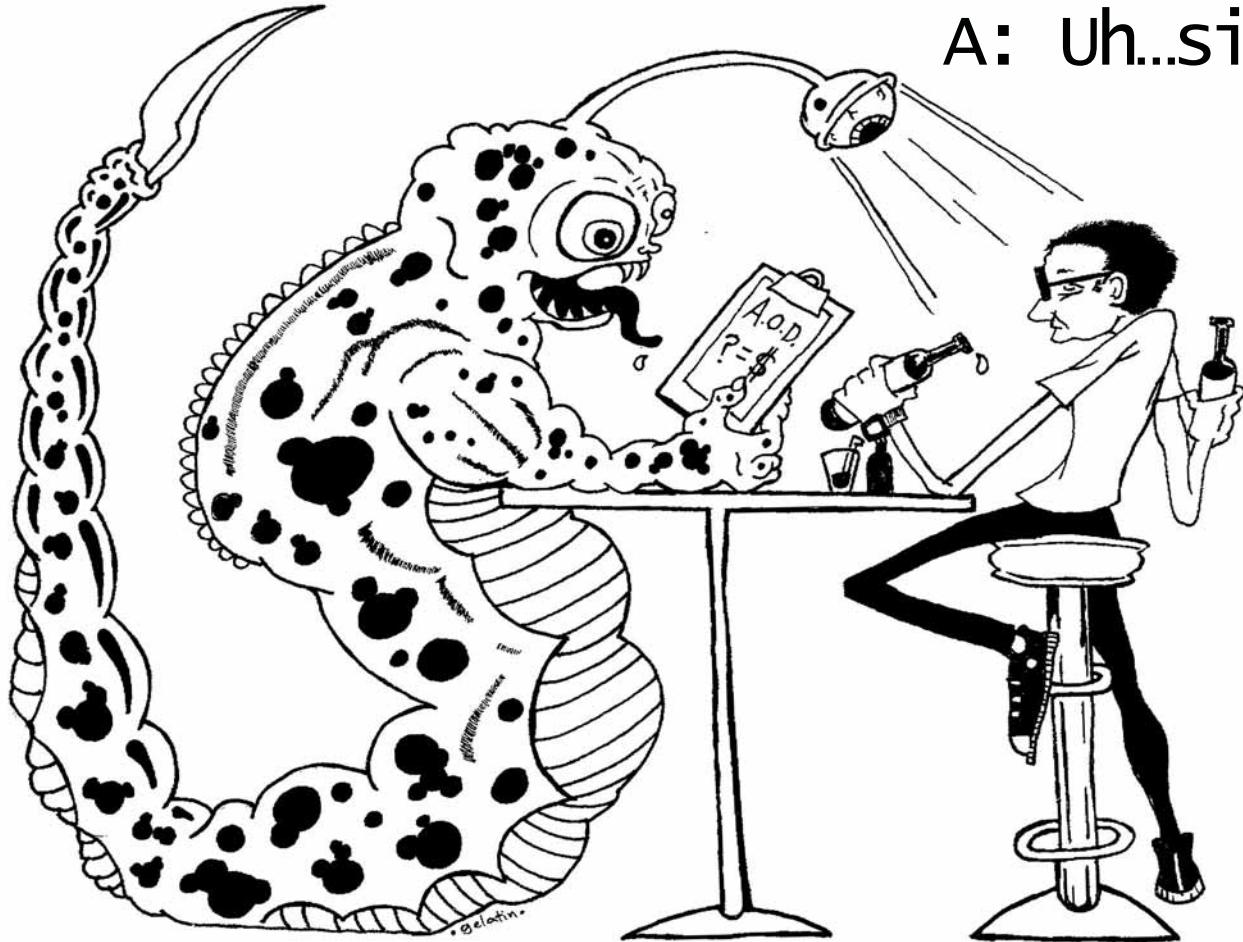
TRANSLATION: I’d like to omit mention of the forty of Colt 45 i drank in the car on the way there, on the grounds that that qualified as “personal time.” I’d also like to omit mention of the bottle of peppermint Schnapps we were passing around the campfire right before i left, because i’d just as soon not have it go on my record that i went to the wall over a few mouthfuls of cold Scope®. And the wapatuli tasted like Hawaiian Punch™, i don’t care how much booze the hostess said was in it.

Q: *What was your BAC when you got pulled over?*

A: Point-one-seven.

TRANSLATION: Point-one-seven, and do you know for how long i lost my license? EIGHT FUCKING MONTHS! Do you know what my BAC was when i crashed my car in a complete drunken stupor in 1991? POINT-TWO-SIX! And do you know how long i lost my license for after crashing my car in a complete drunken stupor in 1991? EIGHT FUCKING MONTHS! Can SOMEBODY here kindly EXPLAIN to me how being a completely irresponsible stuporous idiot who is goddamn lucky he didn’t kill anyone and being some dope that wound up taking an “improper right turn” while one Schnapp over the line merit the same length license suspension??? I mean, if i woulda known i was gonna get the same eight month suspension as i got when i totaled my car in ‘91, i would have chugged a bottle of tequila with my hands handcuffed behind my back in the rear of the squad car, headbutted the glass til i broke thru to the front seat, jammed my head into the accelerator while fucking with the parking brake, causing the cop car to screech into some manner of madcap, high-speed Cheerio® til it went spinning off a cliff, exploding in mid-air while i get flung to safety on some jutting precipice or another, like i was on *The Rockford Files* or something. I mean, a guy wants to get his money’s worth, ya know?

Q: How many drinks do you usually have when you go out?
A: Uh...six?



TRANSLATION: Six: Tap beer, canned beer, bottled beer, mixed drinks, shots, and shit with fruit in it.

Q: How did you get your car home?

A: I had a passenger who was able to drive, because she blew zeroes on the breathalyzer.

TRANSLATION: I had a passenger who was able to drive, because she blew zeroes on the breathalyzer, BECAUSE SHE GOT STONED INSTEAD. Nicely done, Officer Krupke! Thanks for keeping the roads safe for all of us!

Q: Could you live with yourself if you knew your drinking caused someone else's death?

A: No.

TRANSLATION: No, but, then again, could you live with yourself if you pulled someone over because he made an "improper right turn" out of the left-hand lane at a deserted rural intersection at 3 AM because he realized he needed to turn right to get back to the highway, AN IMPROPER RIGHT TURN HE WOULD HAVE TAKEN TEN TIMES OUT OF TEN ANYWAY, and then gave him a breathalyzer test because he admitted he was drinking ((unfortunately, the implicit qualifier of "yes i have been drinking NOW UNLESS YOU SAW ME WEAVING ALL OVER THE ROAD GET THE FUCK OUT OF MY FACE AND LET ME DRIVE HOME YOU MUSTACHIOED TURD" was not picked up upon by all parties)) and threw the book

at him? I mean, that's what this guy DOES for a living? How unhelpful. Other people grow crops, or tend bar, or write articles for wrestling magazines, or are hookers—i.e., they perform services of some functional utility to society, for which they are compensated. How does this guy rate that he doesn't have to find gainful employment like everybody else?

Q: How many drinks do you usually have when you go out?

A: Uh...six?

TRANSLATION: Six: Tap beer, canned beer, bottled beer, mixed drinks, shots, and shit with fruit in it.

Q: Have you ever tried any street drugs?

A: Well, i am forty-five years old. I've smoked pot before.

TRANSLATION: And when i say "before," i mean "before i got here this morning." I've snorted coke, but that didn't work well because i sneezed a whole eight-ball onto somebody's floor, and i almost got killed because they thought i was doing a gag from a Woody Allen movie ((LOOK AT ME. LOOK AT THESE GLASSES. Do i LOOK like a guy who WON'T sneeze the coke all over the floor?

No. I do not. Then again, you guys don't not look like the type of guys who'll be frantically

trying to sniff the dispelled cocaine out of the carpet after i sneeze it there, either, so i guess it's fifty-fifty all around)). I did acid a few times, but that got problematic when i tried to drive home and had to jam on the brakes in the middle of the interstate in downtown Milwaukee when i realized that all the lines on the road came to a point so what the hell do i do now? I smoked crack once and i kind of liked it, but it made my tongue feel really big, and not in a cool Gene Simmons way either—more like a "piece of waterlogged poop that's been sitting in the toilet bowl for the last twelve hours" way. I did take ecstasy a couple times, but that was just to bang two chicks at once. If that drug has any actual properties other than costing a lot and making girls think they're not getting their money's worth if they don't imagine themselves amazingly horny, i'm not aware of them.

Q: What's the worst part of this experience?

A: No offense, but I absolutely, positively do not need ANY of this in my life right now.

TRANSLATION: Word. Also, can you lend me two-hundred fifty dollars? I need to pay off my assessment.

Love,
Norb



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FALL 2010: NEW RELEASES



PACER Debut 10" EP

Chunksaah's first release from a UK band (or any non-US band!!). Although PACER itself is in it's infancy, the four members have been releasing music for over a decade. Most appropriately, Mark & Dave were members of anthemic UK hardcore band THE STEAL who broke up in late 2009; leaving two full length albums and memorable tours with Lifetime, Paint It Black & Against Me! to name but a few. This is straight up melodic punk rock for fans of The Bouncing Souls, The Descendents, Lifetime, and Latterman.



STICKS & STONES "NINETEEN EIGHTY SEVEN" 12" EP w/ Etched B-Side

First time ever release of the group's original 6 song Demo. Showing surprising maturity and musicianship for a gang of 17 year olds and their adopted 21 year old singer, "1987" features members who would go on to be dead, missing and still playing in the popular WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY, cutting their teeth, bloodying their knuckles and sharpening their minds on outrage barely contained by melody. Honest, intelligent, angry Punk Rock from Ronald Reagan's Amerika. Hello!



THE GREAT EXPLAINER "THE WAY THINGS SWELL" Debut 10" EP

Smearing the lines between punk, hardcore and indie, THE GREAT EXPLAINER offers a progressive alternative to the typical punk rock fare. Look forward to dual contrasting vocals, complex yet aggressive guitar work and a powerfully locked in rhythm section.

Recorded, mixed and produced by Pete Steinkopf (The Bouncing Souls).

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AND THEY ASKED ME IF I COULD DO IT...

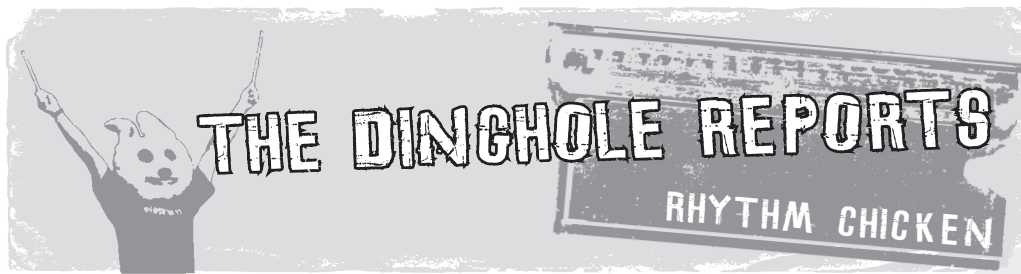


I AGREED, FIGURING IT WOULD BE A
TEMORARY THING. SOMETHING TO DO
ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS. BUT NOW
I'VE REALIZED...

...I LOVE TO ROCK!

...AND THEY CAN'T
HAVE THEIR MIC
BACK!





**“Two words:
Bo! Ring!”**

Everybody Got Sticky

The Dinghole Reports
By The Rhythm Chicken
(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)
[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

I just sat down to my over-cluttered desk in my over-cluttered little office in my totally over-cluttered trashy backwoods trailer here in northern Wisconsin. Having just opened a twelve-ounce can of Hamm's and relaxing in the first few gulps, I think back to the many years I have called this place home. In the years before I lived here in the trailer, I lived in the woodshed behind the trailer. When I lived back there I just paid the electric bill for the property, about \$60/month. Now I pay the full rent for the trailer, woodshed, and surrounding ten acres of property, \$325/month. There's a certain undeniable comfort in living in a shithole, deep in the woods.

The trailer itself has a personality all its own. The landlady tells me it was put on this property in the mid-1960s. After over forty years of dilapidation, it's still standing and still holding in all my books, knick-knacks, records, CDs, my fat-jiggler machine, my mismatched furniture, my tympani drum, my accordion, my boxes and boxes of junk and mementos, my parade signs, thrift store cowboy hats, embalming machine, old speakers, Polish artifacts, and years of craftily-placed mousetraps. The roof has leaks. The walls have mold and mildew and are peeling away in spots. The ceiling sags in every room. The light switches buzz and flicker when turned on. The walls will flex and bend in a good windstorm. I've just learned that a woodchuck made his new home in the unseen crawlspace beneath my home, not to mention the mysterious fanged beast that has clawed his way into the attic of my woodshed. This place takes a lickin' and keeps on tickin'.

Well, as they say, change is inevitable. My Main Hen has decided to quit her teaching job in Las Vegas and has moved to this remote and odd corner of the Midwest. After six years in the twenty-four-hour, billion-candle-power chaos that is Las Vegas, she is moving here to the Wisconsin northwoods. I really must give her credit for this bold move. I am most excited to have her here for a surely grueling and harsh ghost town winter under layers of ice and snow! This good news brings with it some truly sad

news, however. My beloved trailer, and all my beloved junk and clutter within, will not allow room enough for the both of us. This installment of the Dinghole Reports will be the very last one written from this historic location. These are my final scratchings from this most righteous castle.

(Moving out of THE TRAILER??? That's insanity! How can you leave this... this... this place? The Rhythm Chicken and the trailer are nearly synonymous! This place could very well be the source of your power! The power of RUCKUS! – F.F.)

[Really, Mr. Chicken, I do fear you are making a grave mistake. I mean, where could you possibly move to? – Dr. S.]

After months of searching, I have found what I believe to be a suitable new home for a punk rock superhero of my standing (and that standing being one barely above contempt). I have found a small blue home just six miles north of here in the quiet town of Ellison Bay. Just over sixty years ago the house was purchased from the Sears Roebuck catalog, sent to Sturgeon Bay on a train, and then trucked up to its current location in numerous pieces. I think I can get behind a home that was purchased from the Sears catalog! The attic boasts a large studio space. The basement is dry as a bone. The property is heavily wooded and way back into the woods it also includes... *another dilapidated trailer!* HA HA HA HA HA HAAA! I will be paying the exact same in rent, but this time *utilities are included!* HA HA HA HA HA HAAAA! This chicken's got a new coop! The Main Hen and I will rule this northern land like drunken monarchs!

(Yeah, whatever, Chicken. You and the little lady are just going to join the rest of us pathetic house-dwellers. I've got two words for you: BO! RING! – F.F.)

[Okay, enough of this bloated domicile report! Let's get to the reason you are even allowed in this esteemed publication. – Dr. S.]

(Wait, wait, don't tell me... it's the mid-Summer installment of the Dinghole Reports. I'm going to go out on a limb here and

predict another completely expected parade appearance. – F.F.)

[It really should come as no surprise by now. – Dr. S.]

Dinghole Report #115: SLIMY WORM RUCKUS! (Rhythm Chicken sighting #461)

It was the Friday night before Milwaukee's South Shore Frolics parade. As is tradition, Ruckus O'Reily and I were staggering about Milwaukee's south side in violent preparation for the greatest of all parades. This time my Main Hen joined us with her sister Jenny and her Las Vegas co-worker Sam. After a nightlong drunken brainstorm session, my Main Hen came up with this year's plan of attack: BUCKETS OF WATER-SOAKED GUMMI WORMS! Seriously, this is punk rock! When trying to get the most punk rock food fight material, what can possible beat slimy gummi worms? We were armed with a most potent idea and drank the rest of the night away for good measure.

Soon after sunrise, Ruckus ran to Pick 'n' Save to buy a monstrous pile of gummi worms! The rest of us met at Rushmore Bill's house to assemble the float. I made quick posters for the side of the float that said CHICKEN-NOMICS! and EAT AT JOE'S! Beer cans were emptied and taped onto the float as real-life decorations. Bill gave us some buckets of water and we began soaking the ammo immediately.

Finally, I learned from my last Chicken gig and called upon my trusty sock monkey, Nuzzles, to help out. He was mounted on the front of the float holding a can of Pabst. We were ready. Then my Main Hen's dad showed up with her sister on his Harley. The back of Bill's pickup truck now contained one Rhythm Chicken with chickenkit, Ruckus O'Reily, my Main Hen, her father Wes, her sisters Jenny and Brittany, her co-worker Sam, piles of candy and toys to throw to the kids, a bag of twenty little booze bottles to throw to the adults, and buckets of slimy gummi worms to throw at the punk rock food fighters! Again, we were ready.

As we inched into the parade, I began pounding out my time-tested ruckus. My back has been feeling better lately and I was giving them a full-contact taste of my riotous rhythm ruckus! Children yelled!



BILL PINKEL

There's a certain undeniable comfort in living in a shithole, deep in the woods.

Adults yelled! Dogs howled! The parade was in progress, and we were gearing up for the holiest time of year, the annual Rushmor float Rhythm Chicken food fight! As we neared the crowd outside of Rushmor Records, they anxiously awaited what would rain on them this time. Ruckus O'Reily tapped my back and said, "This is it! We're at Rushmor!" I instantly gassed up my gig! I pounded out a ferocious set of rhythms like it was 1999! My ears and wings flew about as my wild kick-ass beats pummeled the crowd of rock cretins. At the same time, my float full of elves began throwing handful after slimy handful of wet gummi worms on the crowd! THEY SCREAMED! They got slimed! They got sticky! We got sticky! Everybody got sticky! PUNK ROCK! My crew of ruckus elves later told me that the rock cretins tried picking up the worms to throw back... but

they were too slimy and kept slipping out of their hands! HA HA HA HA HA HAAAAA! Only the Rhythm Chicken can make it rain wet slimy gummi worms on your parade!

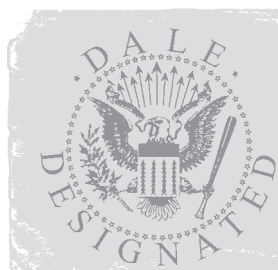
[Really though, Rhythm Chicken. This annual food fight gig is getting to be most expected. You're not surprising anyone here. – Dr. S.]

(And now you're moving into a *house*? I wouldn't be surprised if Todd finds some new young upstart to take your place. Haven't you got *anything* new to tell us? – F.F.)

Well, while our float was in line waiting to enter the parade, a photographer from the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* paid us a visit and snapped some action shots of my ruckus warm-up session. The next morning,

Ruckus O'Reily and I were pictured on the front page of the Local section in full color! My bright orange Jordache shorts and blue Pabst suspenders looked most stylish! Two days later, I received an email from some production manager for the Milwaukee Admirals. He is now asking the Rhythm Chicken to perform live at their home games. This brings up two questions for me: 1.) Why are sports teams always interested in my dirty performances? and 2.) Who are the Milwaukee Admirals?

–Rhythm Chicken
rhythmchicken@hotmail.com



I'M AGAINST IT

DESIGNATED DALE

"He picked himself off the floor and continued to run around like a hurt animal."

The Ones You Can't Forget

Have you ever stopped and really thought of the places that you've been to over the years? The ones that hosted the memorable gigs that you've caught or played at? Depending on where you lived, some neighborhoods had a handful of hole-in-the-wall or various-sized theaters that have put on many a raucous good time. Growing up in the Southern California area, there were a few places that I really dug on, places that always delivered a good time for catching some really great shows or for playing, too.

Back in 1989, I was a nineteen-year-old lacking the proper I.D. to get my then skinny butt through the doors and into places that were putting on the better shows, but by using my older brother Joe's I.D., problem solved (thanks again, Joe!). One of the 21+ places that was putting on some great gigs at the time was a moderately-sized venue in Long Beach called Bogart's, planted in a rather ginourmous shopping plaza located off of Pacific Coast Highway, not too far from Cal State Long Beach.

I was playing in one of my first bands during this time, The Bundy BBQ—named after serial killer Ted Bundy who died in the electric chair—and we were offered a Wednesday "new band night" slot at Bogart's with a handful of others, including a just-starting-out Dread Zeppelin, who were actually very cool and very funny guys. Needless to say, I was beyond stoked that I was finally going to be playing in a 21+ bar.

Bogart's was such a great venue because it was large enough to host the touring punk rock bands at the time, but intimate enough that every seat and standing room in that place had a great view. Their sound system was über-blaring, and if a band was playing with a towering wall of guitars that particular night, your ears would often feel like humming tuning forks as you walked out after a show (DJ Ray, if you happen to be reading this, shoot me an email! I'd love to catch up with ya!).

There were a lot of stellar shows I was fortunate enough to catch at Bogart's, including the first time Pegboy played in Southern California on their *Strong Reaction* tour (to a crowd of about thirty or so people). Larry Damore & Co. tore into their set like they owned the place, and I was happy as a pig in shit, with a huge smile plastered across my mug the entire time, barking along with my bony fists in the air.

There were all of the heavy-duty, rawking Big Drill Car shows I remember seeing there,

and thanks to my homeboy Glenn in Houston, who used to come out and stay with me to catch these gigs in particular, I also have a couple of BDC shows on VHS that he filmed there. Good times and great memories thanks to Glenn, my punk rock brother from another Filipino mother!

One night BDC were playing, I recall some surfer kid with Jeff Spicoli hair had launched himself off the stage and clipped his forehead hard on the corner of the air vent from stage diving too high. Forehead gashed wide open, he picked himself off the floor and continued to run around like a hurt animal. I remember seeing The Hanson Brothers play their first-time SoCal gig down at Bogart's, and not only were they fantastic, but the place was stacked to the ceiling with crazed Nomeansno and Didjits fans, as The Didjits were co-headlining that same night, I believe. Sweaty fun, indeed. Other great sets I remember catching there were from bands like The Muffs (Chris and Melanie era!), The Dickies, L7, The Creamers, Olivelawn, Cadillac Tramps, Babes In Toyland ('member them?), and one of the first original line-up reunions of The Adolescents in years that was outta this world (and had one of the biggest, craziest pits I witnessed at Bogart's, ever). Another place that really started happening once Bogart's closed down in 1994 was Bonnie Price's Foothill Club, also in Long Beach (technically Signal Hill). The Foothill was one of the oldest honky-tonk bars in the area and was starting to host a whole bunch of punk rock bills during this time.

I remember going to a number of rollicking gigs by LBC locals The Humpers there, as well as taking in a night of some supernatural rock'n'roll exorcised by way of The Candy Snatchers, who brought it in spades that evening, just like they always have. I laugh to myself, remembering the Snatchers' guitarist Matthew (RIP) kicking beer bottles off the edge of the stage, aimed at stupid people who thought it was funny to taunt the band. I also caught Throw Rag for the very first time at The Foothill, when they were just getting their band ready to shake down its audiences with their own brand of delicious rock'n'roll voodoo.

I vividly remember standing in the pouring rain with my sister Julie to get inside for a Rocket From The Crypt gig one wintery night and the floors inside the entranceway looking like that of a busy car wash once we got in. I even got to do a gig there with my band at the time, Cynical, playing a show with

Final Conflict, the only known filmed live show we have, thanks to our own Mr. Gary Hornberger. It must be noted here that the lion's share of the booking for both Bogart's and The Foothill has to be credited to Steve Zepeda, who brought artists and bands in far and wide. Steve was—and sometimes still is—the go-to guy when it comes to booking around here in the greater L.A. area.

Alex Hernandez, who worked as security/get-the-fuck-out-of-here-if-you're-gonna-be-an-asshole guy at The Foothill, ended up founding and continues to successfully run Alex's Bar in Long Beach these past ten-plus years with many a great punk rock gig happening, including shows from the almighty Riverboat Gamblers (who pay homage to Alex and his bar in their cut, "Victory Lap"), Sun Trash (*FUCK*, yeah!), The Harbortown Saints, Mike Watt, The Night Marchers, and Zeke, to name a few. Alex's is definitely the place for touring bands to play these days in SoCal, especially in the Long Beach area. For the HBO *True Blood* series fans reading this, like my wife and I, you might recognize Alex's Bar as the eerie vampire bar haunt, Fangtasia. And don't worry, there's no vampires risking their own lives selling V out of there illegally (or are there, Alex?).

On the L.A./Hollyweird side of things, just about every little dive bar to play the past ten to fifteen years has sadly gone tits-up, with exception to the Redwood Bar & Grill, an old downtown haunt that has been around since the dawn of dirt and has recently got on board with putting on punk rock gigs during selected weekdays this past year.

One of the places in Hollywood that I really miss is Bar Deluxe (not to be confused with that newer bougie bar with the same name in Hollywood), that used to be located right off of Las Palmas and Hollywood Boulevard. Being an older upstairs/downstairs type of watering hole, Bar That Sucks (as it was affectionately called) was a great place to catch many a touring punk rock band like The Other (RKL offshoot band) and Clowns For Progress, as well as a healthy stock of local outfits like The Lazy Cowgirls, The B-Movie Rats, Cruster, Speedbuggy, Blazing Haley, and Cynical (yep, we gigged there as often as we could).

The only fucked up thing about that place was that you'd have to hump all of your gear up a narrow staircase to get to the stage area up on the second floor, yelling at drunk (and not-so-drunk dumbasses) to move out of the

fuckin' way coming down the stairs, lest they be knocked backwards flat on their asses. (Something that happened often when I'd come charging down the stairs with my kick drum and the dopes wouldn't listen.)

Seeing Bar Deluxe close down was a damn shame, but being in attendance that fateful and final evening was something that still makes me laugh to myself every time I think about it. It started out as a somewhat innocent way of saying goodbye in the men's restroom, writing and carving out names and assorted obscenities onto the black painted-over drywall. Without naming any names, my liquored-up guitarist at the time thought it'd be fitting to help with the deconstruction of the place (even though no major demolition was slated) and started to kick holes in the wall. Like a flicked cigarette butt into a parched valley of dying brown brush, the rambunctious behavior caught on quickly inside with the other restroom patrons and those nearby in the hallway. Picture the ape with the bone weapon scene from *2001: A Space Odyssey*. Complete fucker-uppery abounded, with evil, drunken snickering and guffaws as the restroom walls were quickly reduced to a makeshift punching/kicking gallery full of holes, drywall dust fluttering about.

Well, the guitarist who remains unnamed landed a ninety-degree Chuck Norris kick through the wall, and, at the very same moment, some other drunken fun-meister slipped on the wet cement floor and landed square on top of said guitarist's leg, hyper extending his knee. It started to swell up to the size of an oversized grapefruit. Rock and roll. Needless to say, I got him the hell out of there and back home in the midst of the howling, late-night restroom renovation. To Kayne (the greatest bartender who ever poured there): Thank you much for all of the hops you flowed my fellow bandmates' way, as well as all of the comped Diet Cokes I could handle on any given evening. *Muy apreciado, mister!*

If this particular column sounds a bit like an old man yammering on his front porch— it's no way at all a venting or complaining type of piece; just some fond reflecting. Funny thing is, I've been doing a lot of pondering of places to catch and play gigs and realized how many newer and fewer places there are compared to the plentiful older ones that are long gone. Here's to keeping the SoCal rocking.

I'm Against It,
—Designated Dale
designateddale@yahoo.com



JACKIE RUSTED

The restroom walls were quickly reduced to a makeshift punching / kicking gallery full of holes.



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FYI THE BARTENDER IN THIS STORY IS NOT DAVE.

I'D LOVE TO LEAVE
A GOOD REVIEW OF
YOUR BAR ON 'YELP.'



THE HELPFUL BARTENDER POLITELY
ASKED THE CUSTOMER...

DOES IT FUK'N LOOK LIKE
ANYBODY ORDERS A \$12.
FUK'N MARTINI AROUND
HERE?!



VOILA! THE MARTINI WAS
PRESENTED AND THE CUST-
OMER WAS INVOICED FOR
SAID SERVICE.



I ONLY HAVE \$6 ON ME,
CAN YOU GIVE ME A
DISCOUNT?



THE DISCOUNT WAS GIVEN
UPON REQUEST.

NOW IT'S A \$6. MARTINI!



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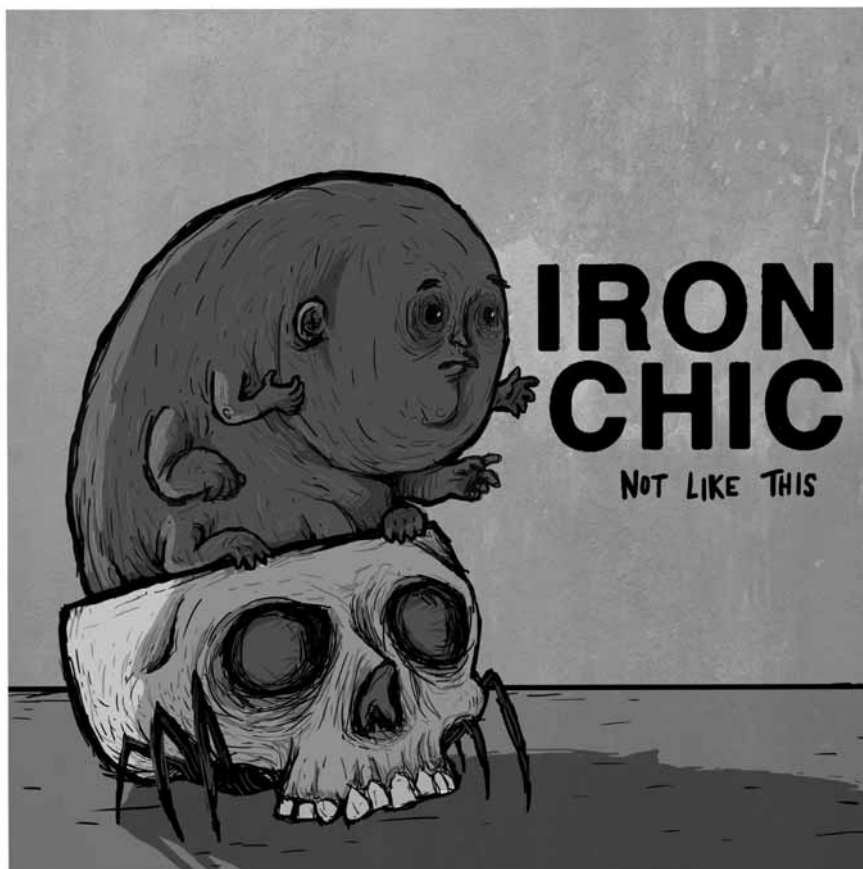
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BITE THE CACTUS

BY ADRIAN CHI

"OBSERVING THE PREDICTA-BULL"

SOMETIMES WHEN I WALK INTO A BIG SUPERMARKET, I LOSE ALL SENSE OF WHAT CITY I'M IN.



THIS CAN BE VERY UNSETTLING.

OF COURSE THERE IS SOME COMFORT IN KNOWING WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO FIND-



EVERY 7-11 WILL HAVE SURPEES BUT COMFORT AT WHAT COST?

PEOPLE IN CORPORATE SERVICE JOBS ARE EXPECTED TO READ SCRIPTS AND ACT LIKE ROBOTS,



WHICH MAY LEAVE SOME WITH THE OPTION OF LOSING THEIR JOB, OR LOSING THEIR MIND!

I WON'T FORGET THAT SUBWAY SANDWICH EMPLOYEE-ARTIST WHO ADDED HIS OWN SPECIAL TOUCH.



A TERRIBLE SANDWICH, YES, BUT A WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE.

MY FRIEND, WHO WORKED AT AN AMUSEMENT PARK DINER AS A WAITER, SAID HE GOT BETTER TIPS WHEN HE CUT THE BULLSHIT.



SOMETIMES BOTH THE CLIENT AND THE EMPLOYEE BENEFIT WHEN WE BREAK THE RULES.



AT MY CURRENT JOB AS A CHAUFFEUR FOR VISITING ARTISTS AT A THEATER...

AS A PRESCHOOL MUSIC TEACHER



REALIZING MY REPRESENTATIONAL WORK-SHIRT JUST DOESN'T REPRESENT MY STUDENT BODY...

AND AS THE LITTLE CAESARS MASCOT



KNOWING WHAT I NEEDED TO DO (NO MATTER HOW ILLEGAL) TO DANCE WITH ENTHUSIASM!

SOMETIMES I AM TEMPTED TO RESORT TO "THE ROBOT" WITH MECHANICAL INTERACTIONS-



BUT WHEN DAILY LIFE GETS TOO PREDICTABLE, A LITTLE HUMANITY CAN GO A LONG WAY.



SQUEEZE MY HORN GARY HORNBERGER

"If this is an outlet for his anger, he must be one calm guy."

Yahoos Taking Over the Neighborhood

Being one of the few people left who gets their news from a paper rather than the internet, I was happy to see a continuing article on bad neighbors. In the *Press Telegram*, one of the columnists asked readers to send in their stories of the horrible things that those who live next door have done. His claim was that he would print the stories for about a week and then he would give solutions to many of the most common problems. The response to this was so great that the paper actually put out a survey to get a tally on the most common problems. Leading the list was drug use and sales, unkempt yards, loud music, late night parties, and bright lights. I must admit that some of the stories were pretty bad, like the gardener who looked up at a noise and received a face full of bong water.

My worry with this report was the quantity of stories. There was no real reason given as to why there is an increase in the ill behavior of neighbors. I remember when I first moved into my house some ten years ago that the people next door and across the street came across to say hello the very first day. I still have a shop vac and some waste baskets from the couple who moved out shortly after we moved in. There was also this weird tolerance for loud parties, as long as they were infrequent and the group cleaned up the street afterward. A guy five houses down sent his nephew to pick up the bottles left in my yard.

Since the economic crisis, many of the houses couldn't sell and the owners decided to rent them out. It is my belief that renters feel they have no stake in the property, so they let them go or they do minimal upkeep. Granted, the landlords put limits on what they can decorate with, but one can still mow and edge. To the right of my front door is a rental, always has been, but with each new tenant the problems grow. The owners used to have a crew do the lawn and rose beds, but I think the new renters said they would take over the lawn care. They might mow once a month and the rose beds look awful. There is this large weed that grows into a tree. I have only ever seen this type of weed growing unkempt on freeway interchanges. Ironically, this particular renter drives a truck with a sign on the door that touts him as a landscaping specialist. Since there is no current care of that lawn, certain weeds that are prevalent in his yard have been showing up in my yard, which means extra work for me.

Other things on the list with this particular neighbor include washing and drying doormats and rugs on the fences. I do not want to see your dirty rugs nor do I want the soapy water dripping on my deck. Also please replace that cinder block you pulled out when you yanked the dirty rug off.

Across the street from my front door is another rental where the lawn is done weekly, but the flowerbeds have gone to hell. This house is being rented by a multi-generational family, where young teenage girls live in the front room, elders in the back of the house, and the young males live in the garage. Last I looked, houses weren't zoned for people to live in garages. Every other weekend there is a party, and I didn't have to watch the NBA championships. I knew what was going on simply by listening to the groans and cheers from across the street.

My last rant is for the house across from my kitchen window. This is a group home for the developmentally disabled. This is the house where the people moving out gave me the shop vac. I would give that vac back in a heartbeat to have those people back. It is not the disabled folk who live there that are the problem, it is the people who work there. The living facility is for the people to live in the community, yet it seems that they are locked in. The biggest problem is parking. None of the workers are allowed to park in the long driveway. They all have to park on the narrow street. Most people working at a group home don't make a lot of money. Their cars reflect that low pay, which means there is a lot of oil in the street.

Recently, there seems to be a new owner/manager who has decided that the house is the perfect place to store her shit. I say this because I have a hard time believing a disabled person, who requires the use of a walker or wheelchair, would ride one of the many beach cruisers that have appeared in the garage. They probably don't drive a Corvette or the Yukon that have been sitting idle in the driveway for the last couple of months. The new owner/manager also infrequently stops by in her new black Corvette to show the house guests where the money from their disability checks is going.

My favorite is the glow that is emitted through the front window at night from the spinning world globe. In my warped mind I picture all those disabled folk basking in the

glow and gleefully searching that globe for some far away place to take their next vacation.

It seems to me that neighborhoods are going to hell because city governments are failing to put the clampdown on these people unless someone really complains. It amazes me that the city will either send out a warning and then not follow up on it or turn a blind cheek. Would people park their cars on the lawn if the city fines them for breaking that ordinance? I don't think so. If they were hit in the pocketbook for trash cans in plain sight, I bet those trash cans would only be seen on pick up day. The guy who follows the street sweeper should hand out tickets instead of waiting for people to move cars from one side of the street to the other.

Last but not least, when did the police become kinder, gentler people when it comes to giving tickets? After all, that's how the state generates revenue. I say this because every fourth of July someone will park in front of the fire hydrant across the street and every year I call the police out because when the yahoos across the street set off their rockets and a hot one lands on any roof nearby, I want the fire department to quickly be able to hook up and pump water on it. This year, however, the officer didn't want to do paperwork, so he drove around looking for the culprit and asked him to move.

So the answer to the columnist query is that the people we pay money to and elect should be held accountable for the decline in communities being short on the neighborly meter. If there's nothing for people to complain about, then there's nothing to get in a confrontation over and people can go about their own business.

CRUDE DUDE COMIX VOL 1
\$??, By Jose Gabriel Angeles

True to its name, this is one collection of crude shit. Every turn of a page reveals more and more anger towards the world in which the author lives. If this is an outlet for his anger, he must be one calm guy. It is not uncommon to see the seven deadly sins exposed and criticized in this book. There is plenty of mutilation happening in these panels. My favorite is the eBay sell sheet for a Dorkbuttmán figure which no one would pick up for a mere seventy-five cents. It shows that, behind all the carnage in this book, there is a dark underbelly of humor going on. Pretty weird stuff. (lulu.com, joseangeles@muchomail.com, crudedude.net)



MARCOS SIREF

**I have only ever seen this
type of weed growing unkempt
on freeway interchanges.**

TALES OF GOOD OL SNOOP DOGGY DOGG

\$ 3.00 U.S., By J.T. Yost

This short little jaunt is very amusing, especially if the thought of the author and Snoop Dog jumping on a trampoline make you giggle. I'm, however, confused that Steely Dan and Duran Duran could be confused for each other. It is entertaining to see how the author gets turned onto the music, except for getting his ass kicked. I think many people have the same experience in remembering every detail of what went on when they first got a taste of a favorite tune or artist. This one is a music lover's dream romp. (Birdcage Bottom Books, birdcagebottombooks.com, theholyyost.blogspot.com)

DECORUM

\$3.00 U.S., By Ed Choy Moorman

This is a very well illustrated comic with humorous writing, to boot! This collection of shorts is rather fun to breeze through. My

favorite is the collection of bad guys, although I believe Snidely Whiplash gets a raw deal because of his 'stache, but hey, that's just me. The pause and the song by Adolph is comic perfection. This one is well worth three bucks. (Bare Bones Press, edchoymoorman@gmail.com, <http://edsdeadbody.com>)

SECOND HAND SMOKE #2 & 3

\$??, By Christian Filardo

Personally, this comic/zine had no real affect on me. It made me chuckle a little, but it also gave me my quizzical dog look. The best part was the "things that should be fixed" and "a few more bad ideas" sections because I agreed with them. I think what threw me was the philosophical panels, mainly because they were kind of reaching. Perhaps, this is an easy read on a sunny day with nothing else to do. (Christian Filardo, 320 E. 14th St. Tempe, AZ 85281, christianfilardo@gmail.com)

BRAIN FOOD #16

\$1.00 U.S., By Mike Toft

Corporate greed has gotten way out of control in this one! Who would have figured that greed would win out when it came to making zombie porn? This little comic is very predictable, but I never understand the use of talking animals with humans. Is the idea to make the story humorous or cute? Maybe one needs to read the first fifteen copies to get what's going on in this book, but I really don't see the point. In a nutshell, everyone's an asshole. Goodnight. (Mike Toft, PO Box 7246, MPLS, MN 55407, miketoft@usiwireless.com, <http://brainfood.thecomicseries.com>)

—Gary Hornberger



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Dan Monick's Photo Page
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RICHARD “STIFF” KONWINSKI

On July 19, 2010, the punk rock music scene in Florida lost an influential member of its community. Richard “Stiff” Konwinski, co-founder of the iconic Stiff Pole Records died in his home, apparently of natural causes. He was forty nine.

Richard grew up in Michigan, and earned an associate’s business degree from Alpena Community College. In 1981—legend has it—he stuck a pin in a map of Florida. Wherever it landed was where Richard and two of his buddies decided to hang their spiky jackets. The pin stuck in Tampa, but they overshot that city and wound up in Largo, a city just on the other side of the bay from Tampa.

He moved down from Michigan with the “Stiff” nickname already intact, so the origin of it is a complete mystery that he may have taken to the grave. The record label moniker, however, can be broken down to a simple equation:

Stiff = Stiff

Pole = Richard being of Polish decent.

He founded the record label with his former roommate, Tim Hubbard, in 1991. The two attended shows throughout the state in search of bands who, to quote Stiff, “didn’t suck.” And, in fact, if Stiff told you that you’re band “didn’t suck,” it was considered a huge compliment.

“You own this little scene,” Hubbard recalled. “Nobody else likes it and everybody else in the world is missing out on the best music that was ever made. Every sound, every note, was true to our feeling.”

The two were responsible for a huge catalog of releases that include local and national bands like the legendary Pink Lincolns, Gotohells, Rhythm Collision, No Fraud, The McCrackins, Gimcrack, The Spills, and even Razorcake faves Tiltwheel. The Pink Lincolns became the most widely recognized of Stiff Pole’s roster, as they went on to tour the country with bands like The Queens and other national acts.

There were very few DIY labels in Florida at the time of its inception and most of their agendas were not focused on releasing quality punk rock. When Stiff Pole released an EP for the Venice band No Fraud, it made

the punk rock scene on the Gulf Coast of Florida valid. It gave the area a name and a face. It was a way of connecting the local scene to a national audience.

You’d be hard pressed to attend a show in the St. Petersburg area and not see the ominous spiky, white haired, middle age guy, dressed in black, lurking in the background, smoking cigarettes and drinking a beer, constantly surveying the scene to find that band, or bands, that “didn’t suck.” He wasn’t the most approachable dude in the room, but he was genuine. And if you were one of the fortunate ones he decided to let in, you found yourself with a great friend.

His influence was responsible for other locals creating their own DIY operations. He pushed Walter Rossmann, drummer of No Fraud, and Brett Chalaire into opening the record jacket pressing company, Imprint.

If Stiff told you that your band “didn’t suck,” it was considered a huge compliment.

Walter and Brett are responsible for the print jobs of hundreds of independent music releases, both from Florida and abroad.

When I decided to start a fanzine back in 95’, Stiff Pole was the first label to send me music for review. I remember the package included the album by the Pensacola band Gimcrack titled *Bad Day, Every Day*. It’s still one of my all time favorite releases the label ever put out. It was genuine, abrasive, and opinionated, much the same way Stiff himself came off.

Then, when I started my own record label in ’98, he would offer up advice on how to deal with shady distribution companies and other roadblocks small labels run into on a consistent basis. Who knows if I ever would have got up off my ass and done anything if it wasn’t for him paving the way. He was proof to me that someone from the middle of nowhere Florida could find great bands from the area—and eventually from across the country—and release their music throughout the world.

In the larger sense, Stiff defied labels. He was a vegetarian who owned four cars and loved drag racing. He was a man who projected defiance but had held the same job at Atlantic Drilling Supply in Largo for twenty-two years. Beneath his shirt with the company logo, he wore a punk rock T-shirt. A news junkie and registered independent, he railed against the government and big corporations on his website, issuing profanity-laced tirades.

Always politically opinionated, Stiff called the label quits in 2000 when Bush II and Cheney were elected to office. To quote Stiff, “What started out as having a couple of beers and putting out a couple of 7”er’s turned into a ten year odyssey. Fast forward to 2000, after putting out around forty-five releases, working with some of the greatest people ever—and some of the biggest

assholes as well—I was burnt. So with that piece of shit Bush being selected President by the supreme court (another sad joke), I decided to take a long sabbatical.”

After a ten-year hiatus, the label was poised for a comeback this year with releases from local Florida bands Doll Parts and Last Great Hope. The catalog numbers for these releases are SPR-050ABC and SPR-051ABC, ABC standing for “after Bush / Cheney.” The comeback was all cut short by Stiff’s untimely death in July.

With heavy hearts, the label will go on but without its namesake and co-founder.

Stiff leaves behind his wife Deborah “Dreb” Hope, and his two dogs: Bubbles, the world’s fastest street dog, and “Corey and Trevor” (one dog).

He also leaves behind a scene he played a part in creating. He will be sorely missed.

—Dave Disorder





TIM HUBBARD

JOHN LYDON

Given you even picked up *Razorcake* you probably know all about the Sex Pistols. Or perhaps you picked up *Razorcake* hoping to avoid the Sex Pistols! You have probably been bombarded with images of the band and their lovable frontman Johnny Rotten over the years, and the following interview will be no exception. Well, except that perhaps it was done on the eve of a tour by John “Rotten” Lydon’s other legendary combo, Public Image Limited.

But how long would Johnny allow the interview to go for? In 1996, I did an interview with Sex Pistol’s drummer Paul Cook that lasted about thirty minutes. That seemed incredible! Now, Johnny is quite a different chap from Paul and has been known to walk out of interviews after a few minutes. Therefore, I would never have imagined, fourteen years later, I would have the opportunity to talk to another Pistol—yes, Mr. J. Rotten—for a whopping forty-five minutes! Here’s what went down.

Nardwuar: Who are you?

John: [Laughs] I’m John Lydon. I’m half a century young and looking good at it.

Nardwuar: And John, PiL (Public Image Ltd.) are back on the road. Who’s in PiL these days?

John: Bruce Smith on drums, Lu Edmonds on various sorted instruments from the Middle East—including a guitar for those who like western twangs—and Scott (Firth) on bass.

Nardwuar: John, I thought it’s really interesting that Bruce Smith is back in the band because he also played with The Pop Group and The Slits.

John: Yeah.

Nardwuar: Have you heard the new Slits LP?

John: No, this has nothing to do with it.

Nardwuar: But have you heard the new Slits?

John: No, I haven’t.

Nardwuar: I thought it’s really cool that Paul Cook’s daughter is playing in The Slits.

John: Oh, that’s been quite some time, that.

Nardwuar: Hollie Cook is in The Slits.

John: My wife is the mother of the lead singer Ariana (stage name Ari Up) of The Slits. We’re all interrelated.

Nardwuar: John Lydon, do you know that Soo Catwoman’s (English punk icon) kids have a band too?

John: No, I don’t know. Gosh, I must be out of date. Did you find all this out on Twitter? [laughs]

Nardwuar: Exactly. They’re called Good Weather Girl and it made me think: when was the last time you saw Soo?

John: Oh, I remember The Weather Girls. [laughs]

Nardwuar: No, not The Weather Girls—although they were good.

John: I used to love The Weather Girls. They were hilarious. [laughs]

Nardwuar: When did you last see The Weather Girls?

John: That’s ages back now. But, me, I like all kinds of music.

Nardwuar: John Lydon, it’s an honor to speak to you and I’ve been trying to speak to you since, believe it or not, October 14, 1984 when PiL played in Vancouver at the War Memorial Gymnasium with punk rock band D.O.A. Do you remember that gig at all? You were wearing pajamas and were covered in spit.

John: I remember not many gigs because, as you must understand, I’ve performed almost continuously for nearly thirty years now. But I always have fond memories of Canada—particularly Toronto—because I have family there.

You will always run into these idiots who just love to spit at you because they’ve read it in the newspapers and have been ill-informed that that’s the done thing. It should not be the done thing. You’re spreading your disease.

I had, when I was young, a very, very serious illness called meningitis, which put me in a coma for three months. When I came out of that coma, apart from losing my memory, some of the side issues I’ve had to live with all my life is very, very bad sinus problems. So when I’m onstage, every now and again, I have to clear either my nostril or my throat from phlegm. I overproduce those two issues. I do not spit at an audience and I do not expect them to spit at me. I always have a bucket neatly placed. So if

Interview by Nardwuar The Human Serviette

Photos by Bev Davies

Layout by Lauren Measure

spitting be your proclivity in life, bring your own bucket.

Nardwuar: John, has the spitting stopped? Do people still spit?

John: Of course, of course. I’m touring now with Public Image, which is a very different kind of audience, really, where people don’t feel the need to try to be ignorant, which was an unfortunate side issue of the Pistols. Many of our audience got it wrong. We have to progress the human spirit, not digress it.

Nardwuar: I remember, though I didn’t make it to the gig, of just hearing reports...

John: And those weren’t pajamas. That was my idea of style. [laughs] Black and white stripes, yes?

Nardwuar: Maybe I was confused because there’s also a keyboard player for the Boomtown Rats, Johnny Fingers.

John: Oh, very different. He didn’t have elasticated cuffs on the ankles or the waist. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Indeed.

John: There be the style issue.

Nardwuar: Jim Walker, the first PiL drummer, was from Vancouver. I once asked Paul Cook about Jim Walker and he said, “You’ll have to ask John about that.”

John: Well, they wouldn’t have known each other, so Paul was dead right. Jim Walker was a really strange character. He seemed open and friendly enough until he joined PiL, and I didn’t quite understand the reasons for it, but he went very dark and somber there for a





while—which was a shame—and he didn't last very long.

Nardwuar: It's pretty incredible, though: a guy from Vancouver moving to England and then ending up in a band with you, John, ex-Sex Pistols.

John: If you're good enough, that's what happens.

Nardwuar: Was that all through *Melody Maker* or an ad? How did he end up in the actual band?

John: I think I spotted an ad in the paper and kind of unwittingly thought, well "Why not?" But it paid off. I mean, he was an excellent drummer. He introduced a very nice free-flowing drum style, which definitely gave wind to the theme tune to Public Image being "Public Image." Miss him dearly. Apparently he's, at the moment, working in film.

Nardwuar: Oh, really? He also later formed the band The Pack, didn't he?

John: He also moved to Israel to work in a kibbutz for some unearthly reason. [laughs] Jim's a strange one, but fair play to him.

Nardwuar: Very near Vancouver is Seattle, Washington. PiL has a song called "Seattle." Was that song inspired by a La-Z-Boy chair that was stolen by the band Green River, who opened up for you when PiL played in Seattle?

John: Pardon? I didn't understand any of that. You talked too much and too slurry.

Nardwuar: Okay, John Lydon. Here it is: You have the song "Seattle" by the band PiL.

John: Firstly, I'll tell you how "Seattle" was written. It's because we had a week off in the

middle of the tour and were stuck in Seattle, so we coined the song's title "Seattle." It wasn't, at the time, very relevant to the song, really, but then years and years and years later, with those riots you had in Seattle over the World Trade Organization.

Nardwuar: Yes.

John: If you check out some of the refrains in the song about palaces, barricades, threats made promises. It shows a great deal of foresight on my part.

Nardwuar: I had heard, John Lydon, that the song "Seattle" was inspired also by a La-Z-Boy chair that had been stolen from you by the band that opened for you, Green River.

John: A chair?

Nardwuar: A chair had been stolen.

John: [Laughing] I'm sure if that were the case, a chair would have been mentioned.

Nardwuar: Because, apparently, it was about a band that...

John: [Laughing] Listen, when I write songs, they're not obtuse. If it was about a deck chair, I would have said so. So that's nonsense.

Nardwuar: John, when you did the reality show *I'm a Celebrity... Get Me out of Here!*, did you think about the movie *Carry on Camping* at all?

John: I suppose it was in my psychology somewhat, being British and being that that's a fun-loving approach to such events, but no. Mostly, I did that to raise money for charities I was affiliated with, and I raised a substantial amount. That was my only reason for doing it.

Nardwuar: *Carry on Camping* is probably the best *Carry on* movie, isn't it?

John: It's kind of like how the English really are. We're very, very good at taking things seriously when we need to, but when we don't need to, we're very good at having fun.

Nardwuar: John Lydon, did you like being on *Judge Judy*?

John: No. Let me deal with the *Judge Judy* issue. That was a false accusation and the man who made it, clearly, went for fame and fortune. Rather than dealing with any said accusation in a proper law court, he went to the TV. Judge Judy had seen the falseness in his claim and, indeed, I won hands down. I didn't enjoy the environment at all and the prospect of being judged by a TV company utterly appalled me. There's a worry I have about that kind of show: that they just might lead into trial by TV, as the O.J. Simpson fiasco showed how a sensible judgment was not reached because of the TV aspect of it.

Nardwuar: I guess that's what I was wondering. Should all rock disputes be handled with *Judge Judy*?

John: No, and, indeed, I don't think you should judge the law as entertainment.

Nardwuar: Would you yourself ever consider going back to school and try to become Judge Johnny?

John: No.

Nardwuar: How did you get together with the band Leftfield in 1993, John?

John: Through mutual acquaintances. I used to work in play centers for problem children before the Sex Pistols. My job was to keep them off the streets and keep them safe and teach them a little thing or two

about life. One of Leftfield, Neil (Barnes), did the same job. Through a mutual friend, who also did the same job, we got together and it took just a little over a year until we fine-tuned it down to a proper rhythm and the lyrics flowed naturally. Unfortunately for us—and for me in particular because I live in Los Angeles, you see—the record was done some three months before its release. On the day of release in Los Angeles, we had those dreadful forest fires. So on the refrain of a song, “burn, Hollywood, burn” it was automatically presumed I was celebrating the forest fires of L.A. I live in L.A. I would never celebrate the burning of my house or anybody else’s. Wrongly judged.

Nardwuar: John, I have the Sex Pistols on 8-track, believe it or not.

John: That’s showing your age.

Nardwuar: I bought it a couple of years ago for twenty-five dollars, which, actually, was a bargain. I heard it was going for a hundred, but I’ve researched this and I found out that PiL...

John: Have you found a deck to play this 8-track?

Nardwuar: Yes, you can find them everywhere.

John: Very good. I’ve still got some very old Roy Orbison. [laughs]

Nardwuar: PiL’s *Second Edition*, *Metal Box* in America came out on 8-track. Do you have one?

John: I don’t think it came out on 8-track, but it’s definitely been re-released. I think three or four years ago. I did this small deal with this very small label where we re-released it on vinyl.

Nardwuar: Apparently, according to the internet, it’s actually on 8-track. PiL’s *Second Edition*...

John: Somebody might actually have it on 8-track. I don’t know how it got there. It was never part of any arrangement I had with the record company.

Nardwuar: Did you think that when you were doing album, you might have had 8-track as a format consideration? Like album, cassette, T-shirt, 8-track? Did that ever come into discussion?

John: No, because the technology was already out of date.

Nardwuar: John Lydon, do you like Devo?

John: [pauses] Yeah.

Nardwuar: I had heard that Mark

Mothersbaugh of Devo was asked to be your replacement in the Sex Pistols. Did you ever hear that?

John: No.

Nardwuar: John, what’s good about Samsonite travel pants?

John: Samsonite—they make fairly decent suitcases. They made a brilliant line of travel pants some years ago, which I still have to this day. What I liked most about them was they had zips from the ankle all the way up to the hip on each leg. You could open it up and there was a nylon mesh, which would let your legs breathe more easily in hotter climates. Very, very excellent. They looked very smart. I could not understand why they never took off as an idea.

Nardwuar: Samsonite travel pants. Did you use those when you went to South Africa because you did some shark cage diving? That was incredible.

John: No, I think it’d be rather insane in nylon mesh and thin, thin linen, to be climbing up and down mountains in South Africa, because I met many a gorilla pack there. And you certainly can’t be wearing them while diving for great whites.

Nardwuar: Iggy Pop, John, did an ad in the U.K. for insurance. Noddy Holder from Slade did a great fish and chips ad and you did an amazing one for butter.

John: Yeah, well, that was a product I actually believed in, backed, and supported because British products in Britain are getting a hard shift of it. Foreign exports are killing what is British commerce and so I was quite happy to back that.

Nardwuar: It had one of the best *NME* headlines ever. The *New Music Express* had the headline “John Lydon Revives Country Life Butter Sales.” That was a great headline.

John: Yes, apparently by some eighty-seven percent. It was a successful campaign all around. The point being, at the time, there was a lot of negativity that was slung at me, that I was somehow “selling out” and becoming “commercial.” I will always be commercial when it’s backing British products. Indeed, I am a British product myself.

Nardwuar: John, when shooting that ad, I noticed a whole bunch of cows chasing after you. What was that like?

John: Well, there was something like a script, but the people who picked me for this

campaign had the common sense to let me play with that. It was a lot of improvising, which is why it worked so well. That’s the real John, having fun.

Nardwuar: Preparing for this PiL tour, John, what sort of food do you eat? My friend Ronnie...

John: Country Life Butter. [laughs]

Nardwuar: What sort of other food or drinks do you have, because my friend Ronnie (Barnett) from the band The Muffs saw you in Venice, California one time having a smoothie. Do you like smoothies?

John: No, he’s telling a lie. I don’t drink smoothies.

Nardwuar: What do you drink, then, to prepare for a tour?

John: Uh...brussels sprout juice.

Nardwuar: John, at one time, you gave a special sandwich with salty-tasting mayonnaise...

John: Yeah, well, let’s not go there. Thank you.

Nardwuar: Okay. Phil Daniels (the actor who played Jimmy in *Quadrophenia*) recently said you, John Lydon, almost got the role.

John: Yes, I was. I went for that role because Pete Townshend had asked me to, but I had somewhat of a disagreement with The Who’s manager. It never came about, which is a shame. Although Phil Daniels did a fantastic job—I gotta say—I could have added something to that.

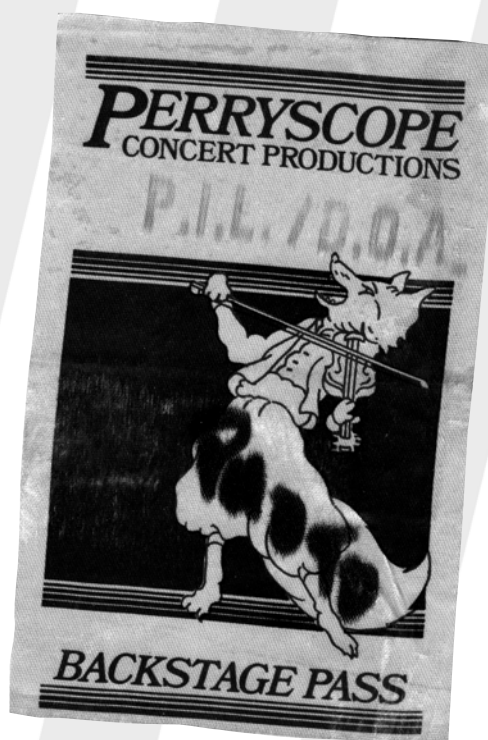
Nardwuar: John, I was also curious about Hawkwind. Over the years, people have wondered what exactly was your role, like, were you their LSD supplier?

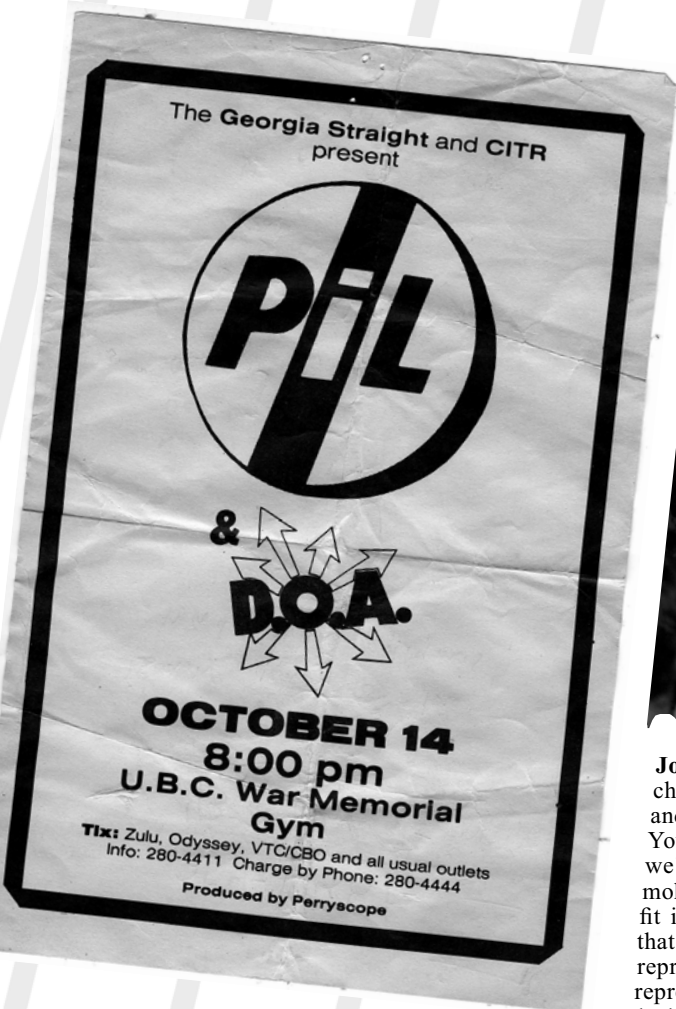
John: [Loud laughter]

Nardwuar: Or were you their roadie? Were you another “hairy” in the crowd? What was your role, John?

John: [Laughs] Off the top of my head, I can’t think of a suitable refrain for the letters LSD but, no, that was not my

**I THINK IT'D BE RATHER INSANE IN NYLON MESH
AND THIN, THIN LINEN, TO BE CLIMBING UP
AND DOWN MOUNTAINS IN SOUTH AFRICA, BECAUSE
I MET MANY A GORILLA PACK THERE
AND YOU CERTAINLY CAN'T BE WEARING THEM
WHILE DIVING FOR GREAT WHITES.**





role. They were a band that were great fun live, and I used to love—at an early age—to travel off to the rock festivals, usually on my own. Hawkwind would always be playing those kinds of events, and I love that sense of community you could get from the very early festivals. These days, those kinds of festivals are too orchestrated. You feel manipulated and you can't even go to the toilet without a credit card. It's taken on a different role for me. It's not really community-run or community appreciated. It's more constructed and contrived. But, at the same time, good bands do play them and I do them myself from time to time because you have to or otherwise you'll starve. That's the business we live in.

Nardwuar: John, when you're going through customs, you've seen an awful lot. Did you actually...

John: No, I'd put it a better way than that. The customs have seen an awful lot of me. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Ba-boom! Yes they have, indeed. I was curious...

John: I don't know what it is they're looking for but, honestly, it's back to brussels sprout juice, baked beans, and cabbage. I will eat these things before I take a long flight because I'm aware of what customs may be trying to pull on me at the other end. Or pull off me, to be more accurate.

Nardwuar: Didn't you once encounter a customs guy who had an actual mohawk? That must have made you feel at ease.

John: It's like, the times they are a changing. I found it deeply hilarious and heartwarming in an odd way. You know, "Welcome to Britain. Yes, we're going to strip search you... with mohawks [laughs], just to make you fit in!" [laughs] It's odd that a hairdo that's actually the symbol of against repression has been incorporated into repression. But, on the other hand, I do kind of understand airport security because as I've let it be known, once me and my wife were booked on that Lockerbie flight, that Pan Am special. We missed that flight because my wife was slow at packing, so we changed it to the next day. If we were on that plane, we would have been blown up. So I do understand airport security because I don't think anyone innocent should have to suffer that way. It's not so much you being blown to smithereens; it's what it did to my family members who had all presumed I had caught the flight and seen that on the news that it had been blown up in the sky. It's quite unnerving. My view on terrorism and all acts of violence is negative.

Nardwuar: John, how about The Exploited and Crass? You've expressed an interest in liking those bands. Have you seen The Exploited? They're still on the circuit out there, playing.

John: Oh, they are what they are. They stick to their guns. It's a limited range, but that's fine for them. They do what they enjoy and they do it really well, so more power to them. People who do this because they like what they're doing are the people who interest me.

Nardwuar: For instance, The Vibrators are still playing.

John: So they should. With a battery change, anything is possible.

Nardwuar: Ba-boom! And John, I was wondering, did The Ruts play better reggae than The Clash?

John: Neither of them. They shouldn't have bothered to try and mess with a musical

format that neither of them understood too well. Apart from my many things in life, I was DJing reggae in reggae clubs at fifteen years old. Because, for me, where I come from—Finsbury Park—was a very working class, mixed culture neighborhood. So reggae, to me, was a very natural part of my backdrop. I didn't think it was with those two outfits, and I think it showed. Also The Police, when they went into that "Roxanne" vibe. They were on the wrong side of the hoof.

Nardwuar: John, what about the band Magma? They are amazing.

John: Truly, truly masterful. Stunning work.

Nardwuar: They had their own language. What can you tell the people about Magma and their own language?

John: Well, there were several of those bands and there was a term for it. Europa something or the other. I can't remember now off the top of my head. I found that new language part a little intellectual, a little contrived, and conceited.

Nardwuar: What do you remember about playing with Screaming Lord Sutch?

John: How funny he was. Not much else. He actually did understand reggae and he did it extremely well. He was bang on the money because he was brought up in that environment. It wasn't him jumping on the bandwagon. Screaming Lord Sutch was pure good, jolly, decent reggae, actually.

Nardwuar: Here is a letter from June 18, 1976 from the *New Musical Express*, and it says, "I'd love to see the Pistols make it. Maybe they'll be able to afford some clothes which don't look like they've been slept in."

John: [Laughs] How sweet. The point being, yes, many of my clothes on tour I do sleep in because you can't be lugging huge suitcases of stuff around with you. It slows you down. When you have to leave very early in the morning from one hotel to the other and travel great distances, the last thing you want to be doing is remembering where all your different accoutrements are. And, so you know, it's nice, but unless you're volunteering to carry my suitcases

IT'S NOT SO MUCH YOU BEING BLOWN TO SMITHEREENS; IT'S WHAT IT DID TO MY FAMILY MEMBERS WHO HAD ALL PRESUMED I HAD CAUGHT THE FLIGHT AND SEEN THAT ON THE NEWS THAT IT HAD BEEN BLOWN UP IN THE SKY. IT'S QUITE UNNERVING.

around for me, I'm going to look like I've slept in my clothes and that's it. Period. The end.

Nardwuar: And do you know who wrote that letter? Steven Morrissey. He was the one who wrote that letter, Steven Morrissey.

John: Who?

Nardwuar: Morrissey.

John: Oh, him with the flowers?

Nardwuar: Yes, he wrote on June 18, 1976.

John: How sweet. He'd do anything to get famous. [laughs] Send that man a dandelion. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Did you ever see him around L.A. at all?

John: He came to a Pistols gig I did here, at the Greek Theatre.

Nardwuar: How about some of your old friends from Britain? Have you had them over? Has Billy Idol ever been to your house?

John: He turned up here years ago with (Sex Pistols guitarist) Steve Jones and a bunch of Harley Davidsons. I think The Clash bass player (Paul Simonon) was with them. I told them to go away because the noise was appalling. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Billy Idol was recently asked to be the singer of Aerosmith. Do you think you would be a good choice as the singer of Aerosmith?

John: Well, what's wrong with the current bloke?

Nardwuar: I think there was some sort of issue going on for awhile and they needed a replacement, temporarily.

John: That's sad. No, you shouldn't do that. Billy wouldn't be into that, would he? Do you know what I mean? When you do that, you're taking something away. You're not making it better, although Paul Rodgers singing Queen songs kind of works.

Nardwuar: Yes and, of course, Paul Rodgers lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

John: Does he, now? [laughs] Have I put my psychic left foot in it?

Nardwuar: Yes, you have indeed. Another Vancouver connection.

John: Paul Rodgers is stunning. I've seen him recently and it was fantastic. There's something good about that bloke, but then I loved Free very, very much when I was young. They were the festival band of all time.

Nardwuar: Well, speaking of Vancouver and movies, did you ever see the movie *Ladies and Gentlemen, The Fabulous Stains* that had Paul Cook and Steve Jones in it that was filmed in Vancouver?

John: Yeah, there were some strange themes in that. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Which ones did you think were strange?

John: Oh, I'm not going to go into it, but it kind of backfired on poor Paul Cook [laughs]. And I use the word "backfire" quite deliberately. Paul will get it and anyone who's seen the film will. [laughs] But go on.

Nardwuar: What was the last DVD that you rented?

John: I tend not to. If it's not available on cable, then I'm not really interested. I don't enjoy going to cinemas because too many people want to talk to me. I'm not allowed to be myself. It's very difficult when you've become a public figure and you're known. You get very little time out. As, indeed, as you told me, someone spotted me drinking a smoothie. How irrelevant is that?

Nardwuar: I think that might have been the highlight of Ronnie's week to see you drinking a smoothie.

John: That's so not right and so misunderstanding me. I view myself as a regular human being and I don't like people to interrupt my regular processes.

Nardwuar: Have you had a chance to meet many of the heroes in American or Canadian punk rock? Have you met Jello from The Dead Kennedys?

John: Yes, I have. I met him backstage in San Francisco once and I met him also another time doing an interview in Boston with a DJ then at the time, whose name was Oedipus.

Both times, I thought he talked too much and over-intellectualized everything. And he seemed kind of humorless. Whatever his personal agenda was, I thought it was too predominant for me; give it a break, lay off the showbiz and just be a human. He was too busy selling himself and deliberately trying to be outrageous, which is always nauseating.

Nardwuar: He's done quite a bit of music and he's still doing it.

John: He'd be better off letting that talk for him because it can be stifling trying to have a conversation with him. You know, everything has to be explained instantly and I disagree. There are times that, as human beings, we just need to socialize in a more friendly way. You can learn far more from humor than you can deadpan seriousness. It's not a war all the time. You don't have to walk around wearing your angst.

Nardwuar: Who do you think was your favorite American punk band? Did you like The Avengers, who played with the Pistols?

John: I never viewed it that way and I've always bitterly disagreed with those kinds of definitions. I've never really accepted the term "punk" or any category. Anything that labels us, lessens us.

Nardwuar: I, myself, have tried to help spread the word of PiL quite a bit when I've been interviewing bands. I interviewed a Canadian band called Simple Plan. I don't know if you've heard about them. They are like a pop punk band and they were wearing some T-shirts that were really generic so I gave them a PiL shirt to wear during the interview. I've tried to give PiL shirts to bands that I think should wear PiL shirts.

John: I would find that a little compromising to my personal philosophy because I don't insist that anyone should wear anything that I've dictated to them.

Nardwuar: They didn't keep the shirt on that long.

John: Although I do understand your sense of fun, the fact that they put it on at all shows a weakness of personality. [laughs] Or they'd be more than happy for the gift. It's a fine line between the two, isn't it?

Nardwuar: Yes, and they took the shirt right off after that.

John: Oh, well, at least they put it on. What a mug. [laughs]

Nardwuar: Yes, Simple Plan.

John: I think you scored kudos there. [laughs] You showed a basic inadequacy in his psychology.

Nardwuar: Thanks so much, John Lydon. Anything else you'd like to add to the people out there, at all?

John: Come and have a listen to granddad because I'm the one who taught them what was safe. [laughs] And indeed, those musical formats I'm talking about were not safe for me to be inventing at the time. I don't deliberately go out of my way to be different; it just seems to happen. I'm not imitating, I'm not faking. Public Image is a valid, valid operation and always will be. That's not bad from a man who's fifty years young.

Nardwuar: Thanks so much, John. Keep on rocking in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

John: Doot doot! [laughs]

To hear this interview hop to:
www.nardwuar.com/vs/john_lydon

HAMBURGER HELP ME



PUNK ROCK, when done well, should make you feel like you did when you first saw pictures of naked ladies (or men, as the case may be). It should circumvent your mind with the cavalier glee of a drunken streaker and immediately grab you by the viscera you didn't know you had. It should make your entire autonomic nervous system twitch from the neuroexcitatory perfume that arises when taboos are being stomped like stinkhorns into the ground.

Because, like nakedness, punk is most exciting when it pops up in unexpected or even "taboo" settings. That usually means, in punk terms, any setting outside of a shithole bar or a dilapidated "punk house" deep in the turd chute of the city.

In my upcoming book, *Nature Punk*, I'll be exploring the "urban myth" of punk rock, which is the long-standing notion that punk is indigenous to the city and that it grows most robustly in dank, dark, decaying boxes of cement. So entrenched in the popular mythology of punk is this urban myth, that piss-stained, barf-caked cement is considered to be the very "soil" out of which punk sprouts. Without cement, there is no punk rock. And within this metaphor, all the various rural "cowpunk" bands that have popped up through the years are seen as little more than weeds growing up through the cracks in that cement and are oftentimes dismissed.

This past March the masked superheroes from Minneapolis' Hamburger Help Me took their dumb-fun version of hardcore spazz rock out of the cement box incubator and let it hatch out on the frozen waters of Silver Lake—a small local lake choked by a shoreline of opulently bloated homes and littered with all the typical displays of conspicuous consumption. It's possible, I suppose, that some Canuck band like D.O.A. or the Hanson Brothers have combined punk and ice before, but if they did, it most likely involved an ice rink. And ice rinks, cool as they may be, are little more than urbanized ponds.

So just who are these reprobates who fouled the rich folks' giant snow globe?

There is a tendency to label bands that cover their heads as "gimmick" bands. I don't know if that fits Hamburger Help Me or not. They do indeed cover their heads with ski masks and they definitely do have a bag of tricks that

they unabashedly dip into, but the music feels about as gimmicky as a ninja kick to the nuts and a nunchaku thwack to the throat. There's a truthiness truthfulness to a crotch full of aching plumbs that can't be argued with.

But underneath the food and the farts, the truth is, somehow or another, by deviant design or by dumb accident, they do present themselves as Champions of Diminished Capacity; a little like the Spits. Both bands, it could be said, are the inbred grandkids of the Ramones—a band who cleverly packaged themselves as glue-stupid backstreet louts in bowl haircuts and ripped jeans. It can probably be classified as "naïve art." But naïve art with teeth.

I'm not at liberty to say who these yobs really are underneath the masks, but suffice it to say they honed their spazz rock chops in such past and current bands as the Fuck Yeahs, Sweet JAP, Gay Witch Abortion, and the Kooks. With pedigrees like that, they can hardly be accused of being one-trick simpletons.

To a generation of cellular Pod Zombies wandering about in states of digitally-induced somnambulism, compulsively rushing into the next diluted e-conversation so as not to appear "out of step," Hamburger Help Me might look like a clownish anachronism. Or to put a finer tip on it: in an era when the Tech Pimps have trained much of the planet's human population to type with their thumbs, while simultaneously awaiting the next so-called "advancement"—possibly typing with their elbows?—this band of kim chee-fueled masked marauders probably seems to be doing little more than running around like mildly retarded luddites honking antique fart horns.

But similar to the "budget rock" of the immortal Mummies, Hamburger Help Me might just be a lo-fi, low-brow return to something less tech-savvy and self-conscious and more primal and raw—and, I suppose, gassy. I strongly recommend that you check them out.

The sparkling pearls of wisdom contained in the following interview were surgically extracted from a hopelessly noisy tape, recorded in the comfortable confines of Jimmy's Bar in Northeast Minneapolis. In full disclosure, the interview participants were under the influence of large amounts of Pabst Blue Ribbon beer and beer sticks.

INTERVIEW BY APHID PEEWIT | PHOTOS BY FANGS AND AJ OLMSCHIED | LAYOUT BY KEITH ROSSON

JEREMY: VOCALS, GUITAR | TAKASHI: VOCALS, BASS | SHAWN: VOCALS, DRUMS

Aphid: What area of your body do most of your song ideas come from? [laughter]

Shawn: Many different ones.

Jeremy: Arms and legs mostly. [laughter]

Takashi: Taste buds. We talk about a bunch of food, so maybe the mouth?

Jeremy: Yeah!

Aphid: So mouth is the main one? The reason I ask is that it seems like a lot of bands' inspiration is testicular.

Takashi: We only have a song "BONER."

Jeremy: Wow, we do have one song like that. Well, it's because we know sex sells so...

know what Hamburger Helper was. He didn't know about the glove and everything.

Aphid: He didn't know about the talking glove?

Takashi: I didn't know anything about Hamburger Helper.

Jeremy: [to Takashi] Have you tried it ever yet?

Takashi: No, I haven't.

Jeremy: (disgustedly) Oh, it's awful!

Aphid: There goes your potential sponsorship. [laughter]

Jeremy: When I was a kid I thought it was pretty good. I actually went to the store and

Aphid: So that's what prompted the name change?

Jeremy: Yeah. 'Cause he was a one man band or something... wasn't he?

Takashi: He was Awesome Gary so we had to change the name.

Jeremy: And then we couldn't think of anything forever.

Takashi: And then we were talking about Hamburger Helper.

Aphid: Because you're a mouth-oriented band.

Takashi: [laughing] Yeah, mouth-oriented.

Jeremy: Hamburger Help Me sounded good



FANGS

Aphid: Ah, so that was the inspiration.

Shawn: Yeah, money!

Jeremy: Yep, it was a sell-out move on our part.

Aphid: So what's the meaning behind the name Hamburger Help Me?

Takashi: That's a good question.

Shawn: Takashi, you should explain that one.

Takashi: Well, you guys decided it.

Jeremy: I don't even know if there's a meaning.

Shawn: [to Takashi] I remember you didn't

bought some like about three months ago and it was the worst dog shit I've ever had in my life. [laughter] I took one bite and threw it all away. It was like cheeseburger macaroni or some shit...

Takashi: So, basically, I didn't know about Hamburger Helper.

Jeremy: What were we called before?

Aphid and Takashi: Awesome Garys.

Takashi: But there was one dude called "Awesome Gary" in Chicago and we found out.

to the ear. [laughter]

Shawn: No thought process, just all mouth. [laughter]

Jeremy: So actually it was the ear that made that decision.

Aphid: Ah, another body part.

Jeremy: Yes.

Aphid: So are you ever worried about reactions from militant vegans or PETA people that might be in your audience? You know, they can get a little uppity...

Jeremy: Maybe we'll have to change it to Tofu Help Me! [laughter]

Shawn: Crazy Burger Help Me.

Aphid: So, with a name like that is your band pro-heart disease?

Jeremy: Umm...I don't know. I think some people need to die and that's one way to get rid of them. [laughter]

Aphid: Okay...so what are your favorite meat-named bands? I mean, like the Meatmen, Meat Puppets, Meat Loaf [laughter]

Shawn: Meat Loaf—I don't know if he's my favorite. [laughs]

Jeremy: That's my favorite karaoke song when people are doing karaoke to Meat Loaf...

Aphid: Which one, the baseball one?

Shawn: By the "Dashboard Light"?

Jeremy: Yeah, yeah. It's like ten minutes long. That's the worst one. Well, maybe not the worst karaoke song, but it's like at least eight minutes, I bet. But I like the Meatmen. The *Crippled Children Suck E.P.* was a darn good one.

Shawn: There's also Throbbing Gristle.

Aphid: And some of their members are more stout than any of you. You guys are all thin and wiry.

Jeremy: Yeah, well drunk guys fight tougher than straightedge guys. [laughter] Because we don't care!

Takashi: That's right! Because we're drunk! [laughs]

Shawn: You mean we feel no pain?

Jeremy: Well I don't know, what is their deal about tacos—or they're about pizza, right?

Aphid: No, they're about tacos. They have a 7" out—I don't know how recent it is—but it's with a band called Pizza By The Slice. The whole thing is kind of a hardcore debate about "what's the best thing to eat after a show—pizza or tacos?"

Jeremy: Ohhhhh....

Aphid: Which I think is a ridiculous argument, because White Castle burgers, as everyone knows, are really the best thing to eat after a show. [laughter]

Jeremy: Yep! Takashi can eat an eight pack and two orders of fries by himself, easily.

Aphid: Scat singing was his signature thing.

Jeremy: We're always doing that at work: "skiddle dattle dittle dattle dittle dattle..." [laughter]

Aphid: Right, but that's not the kind of scat I'm talking about. I had a very serious question to ask about this and you're making light of it.

Jeremy: Well, what was it?

Aphid: I figured since you seem to know so much about "scat," you might be able to tell me if green turds are anything to be worried about.

Shawn: [very seriously] I've heard they are.

Aphid: Really?

Takashi: Green turds?

Jeremy: Takashi, I bet, has had some of those.

Aphid: What does it mean?

Shawn: I once had a purple one.

Jeremy: Takashi knows what it means!

Takashi: I have no idea what you guys are talking about.

Shawn: The only time I've had anything like that is when it's blueberry-flavored stuff, or beets or something like that.

"We do. We talk a lot about farting."

Jeremy: The Go-Nuts! They were a food band.

Aphid: Well yeah, the Go-Nuts were awesome, but they were more of a snack band.

Jeremy: Oh, you just mean meat bands.

Aphid: Yeah, because you guys are a meat band. There are several out there.

Jeremy: I like the Meatmen. That's the only one I can think of. There's Pork Chop. He's a local blues guy. He's actually awesome. I saw him by accident one time. He's just a big fucking fat white guy. He's actually the best guitar dude I've ever seen live. So yeah, I like Pork Chop.

Aphid: Okay, I have to ask about the song on your new 7" called "Tacos." I've only heard it once, but I have to ask: Are you trying to start a food fight with In Defence, with their whole taco thing?

Takashi: Yes! [laughter]

Jeremy: Actually, we wrote that song long before In Defence and all that. So if they want to start a brawl...

Shawn: The only thing I'm worried about is they have way more members in their band than we do.

Jeremy: Yeah, they have like eight people.

Takashi: And they are *In Defence*! [laughter]

Aphid: Was it just eight? I thought it was more than that. I thought it was a ten pack.

Jeremy: Well, it was a lot.

Aphid: All right. Moving down the anatomy; you have your own label called Fart Records and you have quite a few scat references in your lyrics.

Jeremy: Do we?

Aphid: Yeah. I think you do. Don't you?

Jeremy: I don't know.

Aphid: I only looked at the lyrics quickly, but it seemed to me I was seeing poop lyrics here and there.

Takashi: We do! [laughs] We talk a lot about farting.

Shawn: You said gas references?

Aphid: No, scat—as in shit.

Jeremy: Like "I was walking in the woods and I saw a fine piece of bear scat. I noticed that it had some blueberries in it..."

Aphid: Well, maybe I meant scat like in the Velvet Fog way...uh, what was his name?

Jeremy: Scatman Cruthers?

Shawn: Cab Calloway?

Aphid: No... an old white guy, lounge singer-type. Uhhh... Mel Torme?

Shawn: Oh, Mel Torme! Oh that's right!

Takashi: Maybe it's from eating fast food everyday.

Aphid: I don't eat fast food everyday. I don't really eat much fast food at all.

Jeremy: Well, when I was a vegan and only ate lettuce and spinach, I had some mighty green turds! [laughter]

Aphid: All right. I thought you guys knew all about scat.

Shawn: We don't know scat about scat. [laughter]

Aphid: I'll move on. So how would you describe your sound?

Takashi: Well, clearly we're "no fidelity."

Jeremy: We're a no-fi-core band.

Aphid: Which is lower than lo-fi?

Takashi: Yes, lower than lo-fi.

Aphid: That's true, except for the fact that you guys are really tight. [much coarse laughter]

Aphid: Judging by your reaction, apparently you don't think you're really tight. But you sound tight on the record. You're definitely tighter than, say, the Mummies, who were like the kings of crap-fi.

Jeremy: Actually, we didn't do anything right, but our sound engineer edited everything to make it sound like a song,

because we're so bad we couldn't even get it right.

Shawn: Yeah, it was all Pro Tools.

Jeremy: Yep. Pro Tools all the way, yo.

Takashi: His name is Jicky Jack. When we were recording he was like [impersonating] "Oh! Are you kidding me?"

Jeremy: "Can't you guys play your own fuckin' songs?" [laughter]

Takashi: [still impersonating] "I think I'm going to get a drink! Do you want any pizza?" [laughter] He kept saying that! That's it! [laughter] Jicky Jack is the guru of Hamburger Help Me. He made us. He's a kind of Malcolm McLaren in Twin Cities.

Shawn: No one knows he hand-picked all of us.

Jeremy: We're like his New Kids On The Block band. He found us. It was like, "This guy's kind of good looking and this guy can play a drum and the other guy's just a dipshit." [laughter] So yeah, our secret's been revealed.

Aphid: Okay. Well, you didn't really describe your sound—or did you?

Jeremy: Pretty much, I think.

Takashi: We want to make it short, simple, and stupid.

Jeremy: That's it.

Shawn: We figure by the time that we get bored with it, we should probably stop the song. Because otherwise people aren't going to want to listen to it that long.

Jeremy: First chorus, done.

Shawn: You get the point that way. Who wants another chorus, and then a bridge and some other stuff?

Jeremy: Our songs are so smart that they get to the point in half the time of other songs.

Takashi: If you go to anywhere in the Twin Cities, you'll get sick of it. Just seeing bands play for hours, fucking pretentious attitude. We don't like that.

Aphid: Any examples?

Takashi: In Defence. [loud laughter]

Jeremy: Those guys are assholes.

Takashi: They are dangerous.

Jeremy: I remember one time we were supposed to headline a show and we were going to get paid like \$2,000 and In Defence headlined it and stole all our money. [laughter]

Takashi: [laughing] Oh, those In Defence guys are evil.

Jeremy: We hate the people in the scene!

Aphid: On the way over here, I was trying to sum up your shtick and I came up with a combination of Tourette's syndrome, autism and hebephrenia.

Takashi: A.D.D. too!

Aphid: Right! A.D.D.'s in there too.

Takashi: We can't focus for twenty seconds.

Aphid: You guys come across as people who drink a lot of caffeine, eat a lot of candy—basically you seem like your nervous systems are in full throttle all the time.

Jeremy: All we like to do is have fun.

Takashi: Yeah, we want to make it short and have fun.

Jeremy: We don't think about it.

Aphid: You're saying there's no recipe?

Jeremy: Well, when we first started playing—fuck, it started as a joke band. We weren't going to be a real band. We made like fifteen songs in two days and we were just going to play one show and put out a 7". And after doing it, it was like it's too fun to not keep doing it, so that's why we kept doing it. So our joke band turned into a joke band that actually plays. [laughter] It's all for hoots and giggles.

Aphid: Well, I listened to your new 7" a couple times tonight before coming here and in that short time, my first impression was that it seemed to be kind of a combination of Henry Fiat's Open Sore along with the Groovie Ghoulies on speed. And then a little Corky thrown in.

Shawn: You mean from *Life Goes On*?

Aphid: Yeah, I guess so. You guys are Corky-core.

Takashi: You know, I think we don't even sing about shit.

Aphid: You don't? Maybe you don't. Like I said, I listened to the record really quick before I came here. Maybe it was just because you call your label "Fart Records."

Shawn: Although, Jeremy always makes references to poop. Like the old Fuck Yeahs shirt he made with the drawing of a pile of poop.

Aphid: Yeah, I have that shirt.

Shawn: It's one of my favorites.

Takashi: Me too! But I lost it. Somebody maybe stole it from my laundry.

Aphid: So, about the 7"—are you happy with the way it turned out? Or have you heard the actual record yet?

Jeremy: Well, we got the test pressings. It sounds awesome. Just the way we wanted it to.

Jeremy: Some of the stuff we've done in the past, like the Fuck Yeahs, had to be a little more clean because it was more poppy songs, and longer...

Shawn: There were even leads in some of those.

Aphid: You mean lead guitar?

Shawn: Yeah. Like: [hums] diddy-dee-dee-dee! [laughs]

Jeremy: We were pretty technical back in the day.

Aphid: Okay, so you're happy with the 7".

Jeremy: Yes, we are, very. I don't know if other people will be. But we're happy with it. If we can sell a couple of them to make a couple bucks back, we'll be happy.

Aphid: So it's twenty-two songs— or twenty-one?

Jeremy: Twenty-two songs.

Aphid: Twenty-two songs in, what, eleven minutes?

Takashi: The Sprouts. There's a band called The Sprouts in Japan.

Jeremy: And their 7" is fucking awesome. They have twenty songs on theirs.

Shawn: Oh that's right, 'cause we had to go for twenty-one to beat it.

Jeremy: We actually had twenty-three songs, but it didn't fit into the time we had.

Takashi: We really like the band called the Sprouts.

Aphid: Are they still around?

Takashi: I'm not sure. I don't know.

Jeremy: Hideo (of the Birthday Suits) put out a Nice and Easy thing with them, like a split CD-only thing. It was them and someone else.

Shawn: CDs are so last year. [laughter]

Jeremy: They're so 1980s.

Aphid: CDs are the new eight tracks. So have you embraced the whole Ipod, iTunes technology wave yet?

Jeremy: Personally, no. I don't know anything about it.

Shawn: I got none of this. [laughs]

Takashi: I use it, sometimes. For work.

Jeremy: I am a Luddite when it comes to the technological advances of the youth. [laughter]

Aphid: Of the youth?

Jeremy: Yes. The whippersnappers and me don't have anything in common, I guess.

Shawn: I hear that a lot of them are buying more cassettes now. They're telling me they're selling more cassettes than records.

Jeremy: Really?

Shawn: Yeah. And it's all young kids.

Jeremy: That's 'cause they're retro.

Shawn: Well, yeah. Totally. People are going out and finding cassette decks at the Salvation Army and taking them home.

Jeremy: Like, twenty-year-old kids pretty much were born when we were graduating high school. So like the '80s thing now, when you see these girls wearing leggings and those Reebok-style aerobic shoes...and all the neon colors. And the horrible Radio K (the local University of Minnesota radio station) music they're playing with all this bad '80s rock again.

Shawn: I like the *Sixteen Candles* look. I've seen that a lot lately.

Aphid: The Molly Ringwald look?

Shawn: Yep, Molly Ringwald.

Jeremy: We should start to try to be more hip ourselves, I guess. Remember the big, tinted glasses? Those are back in again. They actually look like the kids on that Henry Fiat Sore 7", the *Gnarly* record.

Aphid: I think that's Jeffrey Dahmer as a kid.

Jeremy: Yeah, well that's what they look like.

Aphid: I think it's one of his grade school photos. Actually, my grade school photos look alarmingly similar to his. [laughter]

Jeremy: Well, if you return to your grade school look, you'll be pretty hip. [laughter] We're out of touch with the kids. We gotta get back in there.

Shawn: Old coots gone wild! [laughter]

Aphid: Speaking of going wild, I wanted to ask about the show out on the ice of Silver Lake. How did you think that went?

Takashi: Great!

Aphid: You consider it a success?

Jeremy: It was awesome.

Takashi: My impression is basically when they had this idea, I thought it was ridiculous. Lots of rich people live on the lake and they just want it quiet. So how can we do this? I just had no idea.

Shawn: When we were driving out there, you

could tell between the ice on the lake and the shore there was like a big dip in there.

Jeremy: We got out there on the last possible day to get out on there—otherwise we'd've sunk to the bottom of the lake.

Takashi: So it became really interesting to me. The ice started melting in the middle, neighbors started walking around. When we started making some noise, people were walking around, walking their dogs by. I thought it sounds good and everything's good. And then the police came.

Jeremy: I think we would've been fine if the funeral service wasn't going on.

Takashi: I want to thank Les Deux Maggots. They did a really good job.

Jeremy: It was funny. When they first came out, they were like, "Our Dad is kind of mad at us for coming out here. He said we're stupid because we're gonna fall through the ice!" [laughter]

Aphid: Weren't there some other bands that were going to play, too?

Jeremy: Banner Pilot was going to do it.

Aphid: And In Defence, right?

Jeremy: Yeah, all their multiple members were playing out of town. And

Banner Pilot, same thing as well. The whole thing was kind of a test run. It was Shawn and my drunken idea one night. It was fun. I think we're going to try to it again next year.

Takashi: We kind of have to find out if there's a funeral. That's important! [laughter] But it was kind of funny that while we were playing people were ice fishing, the neighbors are walking by.

Jeremy: Yep, everybody who caught a fish ice fishing got a bottle of booze.

Aphid: Okay, I wasn't really paying attention. Did people actually catch fish?

Jeremy: Yes! There were about twenty fish caught, almost. I gave away about ten bottles of Boone's Farm and a bottle of ice schnapps, some ice shit.

Aphid: Can't beat that.

Shawn: It was pretty sweet, too, because out on the lake, you could take out your beer and make these little mounds of snow to hold your beer. It was a perfect day, too. It's sunny and nice and it was cold enough to be on the lake, but it was still almost T-shirt weather.

Takashi: Even the policeman was nice.

Jeremy: Yeah! We even met a nice policeman! A friend of ours tried to give him a beer but he wouldn't take it.

Shawn: There's a video from that.

Jeremy: Yeah, it's on the Myspace page. It's the song "Human Torso," so it's like really short. It's our twenty-second rock video. [laughter]

Aphid: Okay, next question. What's the deal with all the lyrics about kim chee?

Jeremy: Kim chee is where our power comes from. The first question you asked us about what body part our songs come from—it just comes from kim chee. Kim chee and cobra sake.

Takashi: Cobra sake!

Takashi: Indeed! That's true. In our lyrics, we always sing about kim chee. Basically, we are saying "it's not beans." [laughter]

Jeremy: It's got power.

Takashi: It's a cabbage.

Jeremy: Yep. "Kim Chee Earthquake" is what happens after you have some.

[Makes loose farting sound.]

Takashi: Yeah, exactly.

Aphid: All right. I'm glad we cleared all that

"Our songs are so smart they get to the point in half the time of other songs."



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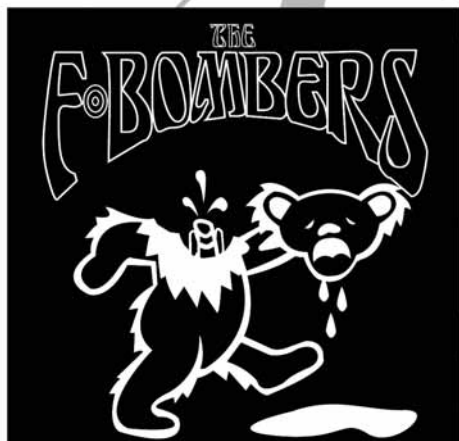
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“We want to make it short, simple and stupid.”

up. This is going to be Pulitzerprize-winning investigative journalism here. Moving on, are you guys pro punk rock bobbleheads or anti punk rock bobbleheads?

Takashi: Baseball bobbleheads?

Aphid: No, no. I'm wondering if you'd ever have bobbleheads made of yourselves, because there are punk rock bobbleheads now.

Takashi: Oh really?

Jeremy: Are there really some out there?

Aphid: Oh yeah, absolutely. There's a GG Allin one...

Takashi: [laughing] Does he have poop in his right hand?

Aphid: [continuing] ...there's Tesco Vee, Milo from the Descendents, the Dwarves...

Jeremy: [interrupting] What?! Well... you know, we have a song called "Made in China," and I'm sure that if we wanted some bobbleheads, we could get them made in China, like every other bobblehead is.

Aphid: Okay, so you would do that?

Takashi: Yeah! Definitely.

Aphid: Cool. I look forward to buying my Hamburger Help Me bobbleheads someday. All right, one last question. You guys kind of seem like you have one foot in the scene, so to speak, and another foot out of the scene. What do you think—are you part of the Twin Cities' punk scene?

Takashi: No!

Jeremy: Hell no.

Takashi: Fuck them. [laughter] I'm being honest!

Jeremy: When I was, what, twenty-some years old, we were in the scene maybe then. But it's just not even worth keeping in step with.

Aphid: So you don't think it's important to remain in the scene?

Takashi: No, but it's important to know good bands out there.

Jeremy: But I don't stumble across too many new bands often that I like. Every once in a while I will, and I'll be like, holy shit, these guys are awesome. But I don't keep up.

Takashi: No, I can't keep up either.

Aphid: But you must still have some connections with the scene.

Jeremy: Well, yeah. We know what the local bands are—but the local bands now that are popular... it's computer-generated rock shit. Or little two-piece bands are all the rage.

Takashi: Two-piece bands are all popular. It makes me puke. [laughter]

Jeremy: I mean, Shawn's in a two-piece band (Gay Witch Abortion) but they're doing something different and they're really good.

Takashi: Basically, it's like a popularity contest. You kind of have to be a two-piece band to get attention.

Aphid: Why is that?

Takashi: I'm not sure.

Aphid: I don't really get why it's so popular now. I mean, nothing against Gay Witch Abortion or Birthday Suits...

Jeremy: No. They're both great bands. I mean, it just seems like it's the "cool thing to do" right now.

Takashi: Maybe it's the easy thing to do, too.

Jeremy: Yeah. It is easier, I suppose. You just have to fit two guys in a car rather than having a van full of stinky dudes. [laughter] So, basically, there are a few good two-piece bands and then a billion shit ones.

Takashi: Exactly.

Aphid: But where did the whole two-piece band thing start—was it with that band Local H back in the '90s?

Jeremy: The White Stripes?

Aphid: No, I think it was before that.

Jeremy: I think it all probably started with some hipster fucks in New York or something.

Aphid: So for all the lost little scenesters out there, who do you recommend? What new bands do you suggest they listen to?

Takashi: Mind Spiders. There's a band called Marked Men...

Aphid: Yep, I know them. I like that band.

Takashi: Yeah, me too.

Aphid: And before that they were the Reds, right?

Takashi: Yes. I guess Marked Men is not

playing anymore. I don't know if they broke up or not. So Dirtnap Records just put out a 7" of Mind Spiders. Four songs. You should check it out. Mind Spiders. It's kind of '50s, '60s—kind of poppy. But I really like it. That's my recommendation.

Jeremy: [coming back from the bathroom] How's your beer sticks?

Aphid: Fucking awesome. I haven't had one of these in a long time. Hey, you guys should write a tune about beer sticks.

Takashi: Yeah, we should!

Jeremy: Homostupids. I just got their new 12".

Takashi: How is it?

Jeremy: It's awful. But it's so fucking bad, it's great. They're awesome. I wish they'd come here and play sometime. They're the trashiest, shittiest band I've heard in a long time. And they're just awesome. It sounds like shit and it's great! So that's our recommendations. And Lady Gaga.

Takashi: [laughing] Lady Gaga!

Jeremy: That's what I've been listening to lately.

Aphid: Any chance you'll do a cover of a Lady Gaga song?

Jeremy: No, I'd love to, but they're too long.

Takashi: Too long, too complicated.

[Sudden, drunken singing of a Lady Gaga tune erupts, with much laughter.]

Aphid: [trying to talk over the singing] This might be a good place to shut the tape off and just concentrate on beer drinking.





KREAMY 'LECTRIC SANTA

A band rarely creates its own aesthetic, its own universe unencumbered by outside influence. Creamy 'Lectric Santa, the lives' work of Robert Price and Priya Ray—a cute, twisted, and visionary couple—has done it with snarky humor and astute observation. Formed in the early '90s in Miami, Florida, Creamy 'Lectric Santa (KLS) presently reside in Oakland, California, where they continue to churn out deliciously outsider experimental pop music that can often transcend all musical traditions. I played with Robert in the short-lived, bizzaro hardcore band, Uncle Puppy's Skull, when I was fifteen and The Fuck Boyz played a few shows at Churchill's with Robert's old band, The Prom Sluts. It was super cool to meet up with them again and hang. I conducted the interview in their meticulously cluttered apartment.

*Interview by Aesop Dekker
Collage by Featherbottom
Layout by Todd Taylor*

*Unattributed photos are
courtesy of KLS*

*In its current incarnation, KLS is:
Robert Price: guitar, vocals, tapes, noises
Priya Ray: vocals, violin
Chris Johnson: drums
Ian Billet: bass*

Aesop Dekker: Tell everyone a little bit about the band's history.

Robert: We started when my previous band, The Prom Sluts, broke up in '91.

Priya: Wasn't it around '93?

Robert: Maybe... We can't seem to get the specific

dates right. Never have. Anyway, KLS originally started off as a freak collective of everyone we were hanging out or partying with back then. I wanted to create something by mixing various musical genres and then tearing them all apart. The line-up changed pretty consistently—the people we played with had varying musical skills and, in some cases, none at all. The intake valve was also in full throttle back then. Due to this fact, it took many years before we were able to sing cohesively in our native language, bothered tuning our instruments, or were able to play a show without repeatedly falling off the damn stage!

Aesop: Was everyone pretty fucked up at that time?

Robert: Well, it was Miami during the psychedelic '90s.

Aesop: You started doing shows at Churchill's Hideaway, now considered the CBGB's of Miami.

Robert: My old friends, Brad and Malcolm Tent (Broken Talent) were doing some punk shows in the late '80s at Miami Dade Community College. When the campus barred them for various reasons—such as not wanting underage kids drinking or punks hanging out on campus—Brad decided to start doing gigs at Churchill's. It was a total shit heap. I remember Dave Daniels, the owner, swatting cockroaches off his arms. There was no stage or PA back then. I would have to lug my crappy old PA there every

*I don't believe
age or paralysis
or other people's
preconceived notions
should be a reason
to stop. —PRIYA*

weekend and attempt to do sound myself.

Aesop: Mention some of the bands that played there.

Robert: The Trash Monkeys, Morbid Opera, F Boyz, Harry Pussy, Los Canadians, Cavity, Crumbs, Stun Guns, Chickenhead, AAA, Laundry Room, Squelchers, Postface, The Eat, Montract. Those were crazy times. Churchill's was a British pub in the middle of the Haitian neighborhood (Little Haiti), and was really the only place for punk, noise, and underground music in Miami. It seems every ten years there's some sort of resurgence. Now there are a lot of bands coming out of Miami, like Otto van Schrieck, Electric Bunnies, Dino Felipe, Jacuzzi Boys, and there are now multiple spaces in Florida like Radio-Active Records, American Legion Hall, and Iwan.

Priya: It's kind of funny because, when we started, I think a great deal of the bands didn't really like us...

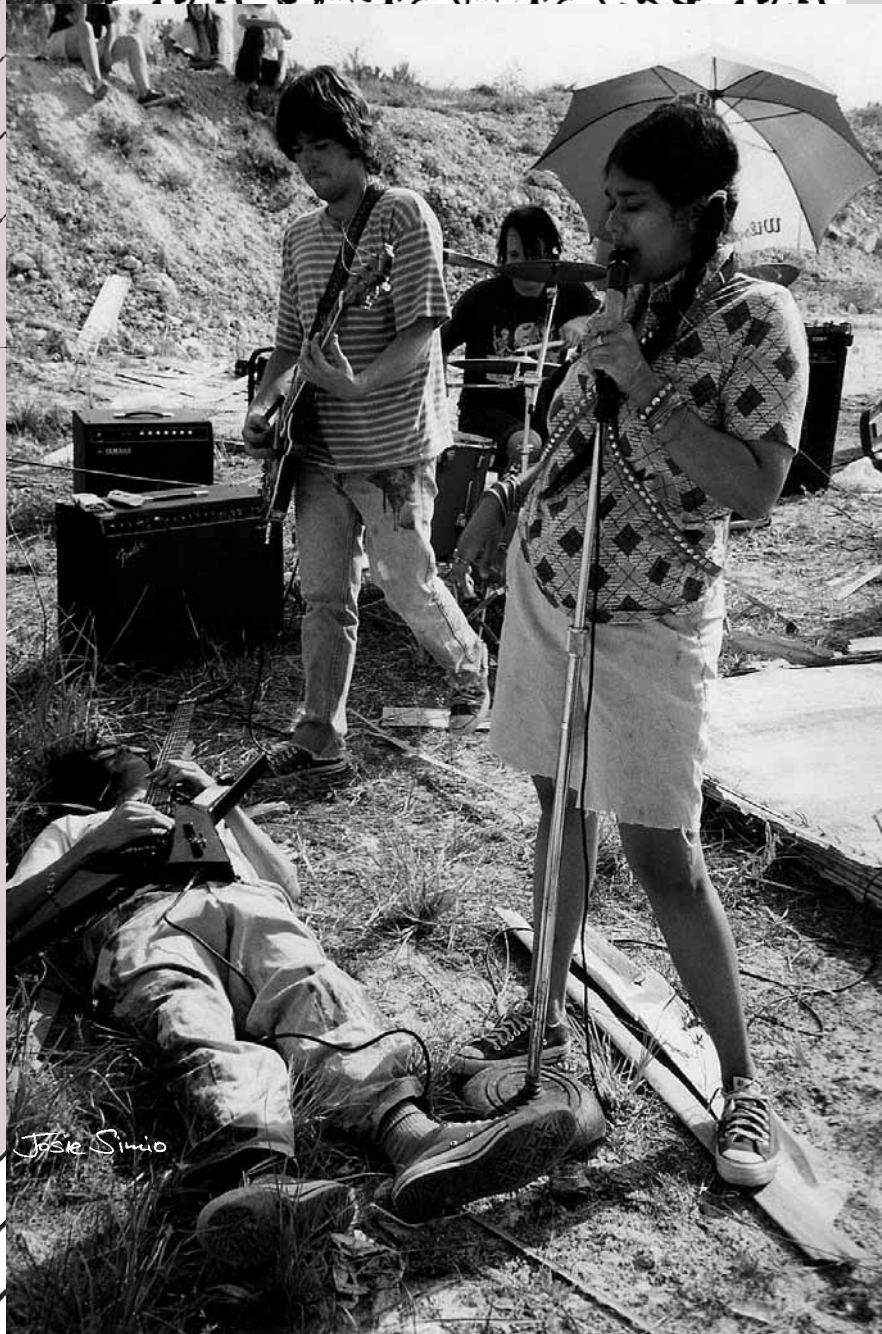
Robert: That's an understatement.

Priya: But they all used us to get them shows and borrow our equipment. For some strange reason, Dave Daniels only wanted to deal with us, even though after every single show the place was trashed. Dave ignored this, due to the large bar revenue. Once when we were playing, someone actually threw a burning phone book on stage. It's funny because no matter how much people told us we sucked, it just made us want to play more.

Robert: And kill 'em with madness.

Priya: People can be brutal in Miami. It wasn't until several years into KLS when Andrew joined that we seriously evolved as a band.

Robert: That's when we began to get our crap together, at least musically anyway. [To Priya] Didn't Andrew (previous bassist)



once tell you that he despised us before he joined the band?

Priya: Yes, very much.

Aesop: Let's talk about the title of the most recent album: *Operation Space-Time Cynderblock: Four Riddles of the Spheres*. Is it a concept album?

Robert: Anything I touch, mostly due to my compulsive manic nature, will inadvertently become a concept album. The subtitle of the album, *Four Riddles of the Spheres*, is actually a reference to *The Enigma of Kasper Hauser*, a Werner Herzog film. Great, now I'm getting all pretentious-ass wad—but for the readers, I'll explain it in full graphic detail.

The film is based on the true story of a man who lived his early life in a prison cell without any human interaction, only to get dumped on the street as an adult where he is discovered by rich aristocrats who train him to aspire to their perceived state of normality. He still has his own take on reality though, which really makes the film. Anyway, there is a scene where Kasper is placed in a carnival to pay his debt back to society and the ringmaster introduces him and three other carnival performers—all lacking any extraordinary ability—as “The Four Riddles of the Spheres.” Priya and I really loved the movie, so we watched it again with Herzog's commentary. During this scene, Herzog spurts out, “Four Riddles of the Spheres. What does that even mean? It means nothing. I just made it up that day.” We thought that was so fucking brilliant. Here's this German director who makes incredibly heavy, morose films and you'd assume everything he does is thought out and overly complex. Then he just openly says, “It doesn't really mean anything at all!”

Aesop: So the title of the record doesn't mean anything at all?

Priya: It's all relative. There's meaning in there somewhere.

Robert: There's something about absurdity that really floats my boat; especially when it's haphazardly mixed with the painfully relevant. Conformity and conventional thought should be considered fucking sociologically devoid and strange. Working hard to develop ideas or a persona that is just like your peers' is depleting the development of a varied and relevant community. It is downright boring. I feel that goes for almost everything. Well, maybe not driving, breathing, brain surgery, or getting the perfect mohawk.

Priya: We're open to all types of music. Most of our roots are in the punk rock, underground, DIY scene, but we're also into free music, experimental electronic, folk, psychedelia, and noise. I just hate that bullshit exclusive attitude that seems to come with what type of music one listens to. You can really learn something from everybody. Nobody should be exclusive.

Robert: Yeah, I think when you understand one aspect of life, it can relate to so many others, but being open to all types of music isn't easy either. It's has gotten us a lot of crap, too. Some people fail to understand or accept it. Some of the less adventurous

punk rockers or indie folks don't like the experimental stuff and some of the noise makers and experimental peeps find there is too much melody. Most people thrive on consistency and commonality with everything that comes into their sphere. In life, things don't often make sense. It's fun to make people see life in a slightly different light to alter how we commonly perceive things. Maybe we are destined to limit our growth commercially as a band. I have to constantly discommunicate my ego not to get up in arms about it. That's just a chance we've always been willing to take by keeping the creativity overflowing and often undernourished.

Aesop: I've noticed that the KLS ethos is a potpourri of pop culture and your music is in keeping with this eclecticism. Growing up, what helped develop this aesthetic? Not just specific bands; where else is the inspiration coming?

Priya: My parents moved a lot as I was growing up. Being Indian—in true sense of American Indian: my parents are from Calcutta, India—I had to adapt to each town we moved. This was really difficult. Imagine moving from New Orleans—southern accent and all—to Houghton, Michigan in the middle of winter. I was not too popular. I also studied classical violin as a kid. My first inclination to playing in a band was after watching *The Partridge Family*.

Robert: For me, it was years of obsessively consuming trash culture: '50s, '60s and '70s exploitation movies. I'd stay up till all hours of the night watching inappropriate horror films. I was raised in Brooklyn long before it was a cultural mecca. Those were the bygone days when groups of kids majestically touted the badge that either “disco sucks” or “rock sucks.” It was like a religion. They would literally kill each other with fisticuffs and Louisville Sluggers. I never fit in—although I was drawn in by that methodical, throbbing disco backbeat—and I daydreamed and escaped into my own imagination.

Years before I discovered the existence of Henry Cowell and John Cage, I used to pluck on the inside strings of my dad's baby grand. He played Latin and classical music. I think having a slowly decaying, out of tune, baby grand piano in our living room was an early inspiration to experiment with sound, as was playing with the pause button on my *Happy Days* cassette deck and making pretend my dad's old tube stereo was star command. Many years later, I took some guitar lessons from Harry Chapin's old drummer, Howie Fields, though I think I mostly learned guitar strumming along to The Velvet Underground's self-titled 1969 album or singing along to Alice Cooper and Wreckless Eric.

Aesop: So it's been thirteen years since your last full length came out. Why so long between albums?

Priya: Well, I had my accident.

Robert: Also, our longtime bassist, Andrew Ross Powell, died.

Aesop: Priya, tell us about what happened regarding your accident.

Priya: We tried really hard to forge a scene

in Miami for a good seven years. It was pretty amazing for awhile, but as the '90s started coming to a close, a lot of people started to move away or fall into extremely self-destructive patterns. We could see that the scene we were a part of was beginning to die out, so we thought it was time for KLS to move on to the next chapter in our lives. It would also mean no longer having to drive twelve hours to get out of Florida to go on tour.

Our intentions were always to move to the West Coast. As a first step, we moved to Atlanta because we didn't have much saved, felt it would be cheaper, and Andrew grew up there. In February 1999, after we lived in Atlanta for a little under a year, we went to this warehouse space that did shows called C-11. They had a half-pipe that was about thirteen feet high. For some reason, I was standing on a loft adjoining it and fell through some insulation to the room below. I don't really remember anything from the week before the accident or several weeks following it, so I am really going by what I was told by different people.

Robert: I drank a heap load of beer that night and passed out on a couch. Dino Felipe woke me up, telling me Priya had been hurt. I saw her on the ground convulsing and unconscious. She suffered a T-12/L-1 spinal injury—she is now paraplegic and confined to a wheelchair. This event was a real revelation for us. After the injury, except for a small handful of people and a couple of benefit shows, we basically had no support. The people we were living with ended up kicking me out while Priya was still in the hospital because they wanted to stay in their escapist reality rather than deal with me and the severity of the situation. Then to put a cherry on top of an already fucked-up situation, some people from C-11 said that Priya was an out-of-control drug addict.

Aesop: Was this to exonerate them from what had happened?

Robert: Yeah, pretty much. We had to stop doing the band completely for quite awhile after her injury.

Priya: We needed to figure out what to do next. My brother talked to Robert, and we decided that moving in with my parents was probably the best decision to make at the time. I don't want to be paralyzed. It really does suck and prevents me from doing a lot of things. To say it is a challenge doesn't even begin to cover it. It did, however, really allow us to think about our own lives and get away from a bunch of people doing excessive pills and heroin. We really saw too many friends die.

Aesop: Well, thank god there are no drugs in Oakland.

Robert: Yeah, thank god for that! [laughing] Excessive drug use was never a problem for us, but a lot of people around us were self-medicating all the time with hard drugs and pills. It was pretty depressing because when we got to Atlanta, we saw the beginning of the progression to what had already happened in Miami: the glamorization and romanticization of heroin. The obvious

repercussions—and deaths—didn't come into play yet. Some of the people we invited to move to our space from Miami were using and getting other people into it. There were a great deal of people in Atlanta who assumed that Priya and I were to blame, which wasn't true. When situations like this happen, you really learn who your true friends are, which people are going to be there for you when you really need them, and who will just walk away. We had to grow up and act really quickly.

Priya: In my case, people were shocked about my resolve, assuming I was completely unaffected by the accident. But when I was injured, I knew that I could still use my arms and that I could still do what I love, which is playing violin. I'm also a photographer, so I could continue doing that as well. Now, if I was in a situation where my paralysis would have prohibited me from doing that, I'm not sure how I would have dealt with it. Even now I contend with great amounts of nerve pain which I seem to be able to hide quite well publicly.

Aesop: At any point, did the fate of the band come into question?

Priya: Most definitely. We knew we wanted to play music, but we just didn't know how that was going to happen. What if a venue isn't wheelchair-accessible? When we are on tour, it's hard for us to just go and crash on someone's floor or even get my wheelchair into their bathroom. Sometimes I have to get up a flight of stairs on my butt or be carried. We had to work our way slowly back to doing what we wanted, but thanks to a network of friends and other bands, we're getting back and doing short tours. Playing music has been, and will always be, too important for us to just disregard.

Aesop: How did the death of your bass player, Andrew Ross Powell (Drew), affect the band?

Priya: I would say that it affected the band even more than the spinal injury. Andrew was very important to the flow of our band. Robert and Andrew were a solid songwriting machine. There was never any discussion. They worked off each other impeccably.

Robert: We'd often write crazy, complicated songs, but we would never have to discuss things like structure or what changes go where. We drank a lot of Cuban coffee and it seemed to flow out of us. When he died, it posed an important question: should we continue the band without him and just start over? Drew was always living so fast, just consuming everything in excess, but still always capable of playing, no matter what condition he was in. Looking back on it all, I realize his death was inevitable. He was a truly amazing person and musician. The whole thing just makes us both very sad.

We decided to continue. We had existed about four years before Drew joined us, and it seemed silly for us to change the name and start from scratch. Not to get all hippie, but we sort of feel his presence will always be with us, so we just continued. I guess I should also



Peggy Nolan

*Priya: It's kind of funny because when we started, I think a great deal of the bands didn't like us...
Robert: That's an understatement.
Priya: ... Someone actually threw a burning phone book on stage.*





mention that we have had fifty-three different members in the band.

Priya: We have a list of all the prior members and I think there are only two on the list who we don't talk to anymore. This is not even including people who were guests on records. On *Operation Space-*

Time Cynderblock, we have twenty-two guest musicians.

Aesop: After such a long hiatus and all your difficult life experiences, was it weird getting back into it?

Priya: Well, it is frustrating to have to start all over again as you watch bands that you

have helped out or influenced getting a lot of hype, but you can't really dwell on these things. So we decided to continue playing without the help of press agents, bookers, or promotional companies. Although we are older and the music industry—even the underground—is youth-obsessed, we still think it is possible to create great and viable music after the age of thirty or even forty. I was really inspired by Michael Griffen—he was in his sixties when he was playing violin and touring with Behead The Prophet, No Lord Shall Live, and Noggin. He had the same energy and tenacity of a teenager and didn't let anything sway him. Yes, being in the wheelchair hinders my life and makes it more difficult, but what I had learned from Michael was that I won't let it hold me back from doing the things I love. I don't believe age or paralysis or other peoples' preconceived notions should be a reason to stop.

Robert: You can pry my mic from my cold, dead hands.

Aesop: Your current drummer is from Drunk Horse.

Robert: Chris Johnson is an amazing lunatic.

Priya: He's really sweet.

Robert: One of the sweetest lunatics in Oakland.

Aesop: Morgan Stickrod is also in the band.

Robert: Sans the drugs, but not the beer, he has a lot of similarities to Andrew. Morgan can play drums, bass, guitar. I think if you hand the guy a sitar or bagpipes, he could probably learn them... Hmm, I'm getting some evil ideas...

Aesop: Like both of you, I come from South Florida. One of the things that strikes me about that part of the country is that it is isolated and untouched by New York and L.A., which, in the past, have been the tastemakers. Though I think Miami is a dreadful place, it has produced some of the best bands over time. Any thoughts?

Priya: I hate to knock Miami. Although I strongly dislike the heavy, right-wing element and closed minds of the general population, there are a handful of people doing some really great stuff. The thing I love about South Florida is that I don't think a band like ours could have existed if we hadn't started out there.

Aesop: So that brings me to ask how you have kept the band going? It's almost like you would have had to live in a cave to continue. Does the sheer number of collaborators and unusual sounds and overdubs disrupt or add to the stew?

Robert: When we play live, we usually turn up super loud, get mental and hyper aggressive, and that rarely translates well to a recording. Iggy Scam (*Scam Zine*), once called me "the mad scientist of punk." I love, and will always love, putting unlikely people together on our records. I think it makes our records stand apart from our live shows, which, to me, makes seeing us live much more intense. You never know what to expect since the songs won't sound exactly like they do on the record. We try really hard not to play dull, obvious shows. Playing is what we live for and life shouldn't have to be one dimensional.

Aesop: Since the band is so all over the place musically, I think it's very relevant. What kind of music do you listen to?

Priya: If there's passion and intensity, if the musicians have an uncontrollable desire and

need to create, then I'm drawn to it.

Aesop: How did you come up with the name Creamy 'Lectric Santa?

Robert: Should we tell him? No... It's a secret.

Priya: Yeah, it's a secret.

Aesop: I told a friend that I was interviewing you today. He had never heard of KLS. He asked me what you were like and I told him that you were like a punk-band-meets-a-power-pop-band-meets-a-Krautrock-band. Like the Contortions-meet-Amon Duul. Would you agree with that assessment?

Robert: Die Kreuzen-meets-Pink-meets-Hawkwind-meets-Crass?

Priya: That's one of the things I really love. When people describe our band, they really have to dig deep into their musical glossary. They have to think about it a bit before they can really give an answer. We like to destroy all genres.

Robert: When we are writing music, I usually throw a lug wrench into it. When a song starts going in a specific definable direction, like if it's sounding a little too metal or country, I try to think of the last thing one would expect to hear. It could be as simple as a drum fill or having things fall apart into abstract dissonance, underscored with a super-melodic violin part. You know, make it sound totally obvious, like Iannis Xenakis-meets-Men Without Hats and then I somehow try to work my way back from that.

Aesop: The song "Everything?" seems to me like a nod to classic '80s hardcore. Tell me about this song.

Priya: [to Robert] Didn't you originally get that riff from Os Mutantes?

Robert: No, it was from this amazing underrated Mexican '60s/'70s psych rock group, Los Dug Dug's. I was inspired by this song called, "We Always Hate Your Manners." It's on the *El Loco* album. The song is super-rhythmic psych pop with some strange hooks. I took the actual rhythm and kept changing and morphing it until it finally mutated into "Everything?"

Priya: Robert always comes up with these, as you said, really infectious poppy hooks or he appropriates an idea or riff and then he tears it apart and deconstructs the song till the originally inspired source is totally unrecognizable.

Aesop: Tell me about KLS and Morbid Angel's Dave Vincent?

Robert: I was looking at the back of one of Drew's Morbid Angel records one day and Dave Vincent's hair looked like it had once been feathered like Farrah Fawcett, or any of the members of White Lion, and then he decided to just let his hair grow out. It was an awkward tangled mesh of heavy metal hairstyles. Still, in the pic he had complete pedal-to-the-metal conviction.

Aesop: Like a majestic Death Metal Lion?

Robert: A great majestic, greasy, bass-playing lion. So, naturally, in the inner sleeve of our first CD, we printed that our band would not exist without the spiritual guidance of David "Morbid Angel" Vincent.

Aesop: Do you think David Vincent is aware of KLS?

Robert: Priya thinks that he put a curse on us.



The music industry — even the underground — is youth obsessed. We still think it's possible to create great and viable music after the age of thirty or even forty.
— PRIYA



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Priya: It's very possible.

Robert: I was told years ago that someone gave our record to Gen from The Genitorturers, and she gave it to Dave. No word back on what he thought. Hey Dave, e-mail us. You should play on a *Sickly Sweet*.

Aesop: You mentioned *Happy Days* earlier. Do you remember the episode where Fonzie brings home a retarded dog and Dr. Joyce Brothers makes an appearance?

Robert: How politically incorrect them '70s were.

Priya: I seem to recall her being on *Happy Days*... or was that the *Brady Bunch*?

Aesop: You have a song on the record called "Mindy Cohn." Is it about Natalie from *The Facts of Life* or is it more metaphorical?

Robert: It was slightly inspired by the Redd Cross song "Mackenzie," which is about Mackenzie Phillips. Mindy Cohn is the earth goddess who, not unlike Dave Vincent, brings joy and purpose to all our lives. It's just another example of appropriating anything and twisting it into something far exceeding its relevance—reconstructed and unjustifiably sanctified.

Priya: She's a saint.

Aesop: That also seems to be true sometimes of your lyrics, which at times, appear to be somewhat political.

Robert: We sort of like to leave our lyrics somewhat open to interpretation. It's not like we're pushing an agenda for a party or a movement. Though I guess you can say we tend to slant more towards the general rights of the people as opposed to any political group. What you see and the way things appear are often manipulated from both sides to often push the same agenda. The corruption isn't even hidden from the public as much as I remember it once was. Talk is cheap and spin runs rampant.

It's hard to tell what's inside the chocolate center. Politics also exist on many levels in every day life. There's the old "mob rules" mentality which permeates many social factions. People are also more influenced by money and their egos then consciously thinking how one's actions affect others or even, realistically, themselves in the broad sense. We as a society over-consume and I am probably the worst culprit. So politics can be a tricky subject matter.

Priya: Whereas a song like "Everything?" is somewhat about how politicians and the media will bend over and do anything for their corporate affiliates, leading to horrible, despicable acts against humanity.

Aesop: Very '80s hardcore, eh?

Robert: Like destroying everything they say this country stands for and unraveling everything they say they believe in, using patriotism, religion, and blatant manipulation to win hearts and minds. Still, despite all I said, I feel, lyrically, it's up to the individual to interpret it however they'd like to. Although I think we already said too much and fucked that up for anyone who can read.

Aesop: It's great being manipulated by the media to want more than you really need, or to buy freedom. There's a great sense of irony

and humor, even in songs like "Everything?"

Priya: Our lyrics can be construed from multiple perspectives and we try to convey multiple thoughts and ideas.

Robert: As our forefathers intended our songs to be.

Priya: But we're just getting the words and ideas out, not preaching.

Aesop: I think more preachy bands need to come back.

Priya: Really? Hmm. I got seriously sick of all those preachy punk rock bands that were around when I was a kid, so I try to stay away from being too heavy-handed.

Aesop: Yeah, that was one of the things in Hickey: we liked to parody. Here we are in a VFW hall, all the punk rockers have paid their five bucks to get in, and do you really

Aesop: One of the things that is really special about KLS is that it is really hard to pinpoint what you people are doing. It just seems so separate from everything.

Priya: Well, that is pretty much what we always strived to do. I remember when I was younger how exciting it was to discover bands like The Damned, Richard Hell And The Voidoids, Butthole Surfers, Camper Van Beethoven, Faust, Captain Beefheart, Gang Of Four—none of them quite fit into what was happening during their specific timeframes. They followed their own creative inspiration.

Robert: There are also generic production values on a lot of records. I'm really into using the studio creatively, often impractically, or as an instrument.

Conformity and conventional thought should be considered fucking sociologically devoid and strange. — ROBERT

think they think cops are awesome? I think they know shit is fucked up.

Robert: As so eloquently examined in The Village People's "Hot Cop."

Priya: There's the adage that life can be a lot like high school. I never thought I'd be that old person complaining about the kids and their music, but my main issues are not about the loudness or volume. It's really more about the absence of innovation and originality. They just don't exist much in mainstream or even underground culture anymore. It's all being so tightly marketed to sell product to a larger audience. We try to book our shows with many different types of bands. You can learn something from everyone. Everybody can come to our party. Leave your burning phone books at home.

Robert: Not to sound too preachy, but people shouldn't have to feel they need to play a specific type of music, record a certain way, or appeal to a specific demographic. There is a great amount of sameness in music, art, and media today. Look at electronic music, for instance. The possibilities to create new sounds are limitless and still a lot of electronic musicians strive to get the sound of the 1980's 808 beat machine. Which is a cool, useful, and familiar sound, but why not take advantage of the vast possibilities of technology, old and new, and do something unique with it?

Aesop: I know what you are saying, but labels have to sell records, so they end up getting into branding. Often times, you buy a record and you think that the description of the record did not do it justice.

Robert: That's because those terms are created by corporate dweebs that think U2's *Achtung Baby* is an essential musical artifact or its evolved descendant, Coldplay, is the be all and end all.

Priya: What I like about Starcleaner Records is that if you look at most of the bands on their label, we don't fit in. But they put our record out anyway because their label is dedicated to releasing music they love. Incidentally, our record has sold far beyond expectations with little pre-release publicity, which says a lot about keeping true to your vision and not giving in or backing down.

Aesop: A question I think every band should have to answer: Why should people buy your record?

Robert: I spent three years putting my life into this bitch of a record. I'm glad it's finally finished and I really feel the labor paid off. Honestly, it's rare that I actually like my own stuff. I have issues with almost everything I do.

Priya: It's fucking awesome... no direct parallel to the music of Coldplay.

Robert: They tear the roof up!

Priya: Which, evidently, is on fire.

Aesop: What is the future of KLS?

Robert: I'm in the process of working on a humorous rock opera about the end of the world. I'd also like to wrap up *Sickly Sweet* within the next two years, do some touring, and work on some music for film. I think getting out of debt, finding lucrative employment, and labels willing to release some of this stuff should also be high up on the list as well.

Priya: Despite the difficulty, I'd like to tour Russia, Europe, Asia, Japan, but, most of all, New Zealand. Every musician or person I've met from New Zealand is amazing and it has always been a dream of mine to make it there. We will continue to play till we're completely broken down and incapable of doing it anymore.

Robert: And, even then, we probably won't have the common sense to stop.

MARK SULTAN



CANDERSON

N

WRITING AN INTRODUCTION TO A MARK SULTAN INTERVIEW ISN'T EASY. From the Montreal garage rock scene Sultan and his Spaceshits cohorts helped kick start in the mid '90s, to his punk rock ethos and incredible songwriting ability and voice, the man has already accomplished so much in his fifteen-plus years in music. With that in mind, I'll try my best to succinctly describe the man in something under a tome.

Mark Sultan's first noteworthy band was the Spaceshits. Formed in the mid '90s, the group played visceral rock'n'roll while seemingly everyone else tuned their guitars to drop D to catch the tail end of the grunge movement. The Spaceshits, with Sultan on vocals and future collaborator King Khan on bass (going by

*Interview by Ryan Leach
Photos by Canderson (victimoftime.com)
and Ben Pobjoy
Layout by Todd Taylor*

the alias Blacksnake), really fucked shit up in Montreal. In the spirit of the Germs and the Electric Eels, the Spaceshits became notorious for their fifteen-minute sets that would end in chaos; the group was eventually blacklisted from a number of Montreal venues. The Spaceshits called it a day when King Khan moved to Germany in 1999, but not before a number of bands formed in its wake.

Not missing a beat, Sultan teamed up with a bunch of his friends and formed Les Sexareenos (1999-2002). This time Mark filled in on drums and vocals while "Work With Me" Annie played organ, Colonel Lingus provided vocals and bass and Choyce played some stellar guitar and also sang. Les Sexareenos was a little more eclectic than the Spaceshits. Major influences on the band included the Mummies and Etiquette Records' roster—namely the Wailers and the Sonics. Les Sexareenos' party anthem, "Everybody Sexareeno," is one of the all-time great garage rock songs from any decade. Les Sexareenos was the first group of Mark's to reach my attention. When I was a teenager, I vaguely knew an older guy who had an encyclopedic knowledge of music. Nevertheless, this dude could only talk about one band: Les Sexareenos. It got to the point where he said "Les Sexareenos" more than the definite article "the." He was a genius, but Les Sexareenos had turned his brain to mush. That was the power the group had on the converted.

Mark grew weary of playing in a full group after the breakup of Les Sexareenos in 2002. Consequently, he started a one-man band under the alias BBQ. True to his DIY nature, Mark taught himself barre chords and figured out the mechanics necessary to perform as a one-man band. Not long after its inception, Sultan (as BBQ) teamed up with old Spaceshits pal King Khan and the two formed their best-known outfit, the King Khan & BBQ Show (2003-2010). Stellar albums on Goner and In The Red followed. The King Khan & BBQ Show was incredible. Mark and Khan really covered the gamut in terms of songwriting—tunes about zombies, fortune tellers, and eating ass—and in the course of eight years, proved themselves to be formidable lyricists. Khan played lead guitar, sang, and borrowed Chuck Berry's duck walk on stage. Meanwhile, Mark held down rhythm duties (drums and guitar) and, of course, he laid down that incredible, soulful voice.

Throughout this period, Mark released solo albums of his own, which differed from his work with Khan in their fuller instrumentation, spilling into slightly different genres. Mark Sultan's solo work often included old Montreal friends—ex-Sexareeno Choyce, Jenna Roker, and many others. Although the King Khan & BBQ Show ended abruptly last June, Mark's still busy with his solo work and promoting his recent Ding-Dongs record, a duo formed with pal Bloodshot Bill. Sultan has been known to form a band and in that same week record a great full length. So irrespective of any situation Mark finds himself in, there will never be a shortage of material from this prodigious talent.

If you're limited, I think that's the way to bring up the most ghosts of rock'n'roll.



CANDERSON

I'm a staunch believer that some
bands should never practice
their instruments ever.

Ryan: You've worked with King Khan for about fifteen years now in various projects. I've read that the King Khan And BBQ Show is over. Is that true?

Mark: Yeah. It's over.

Ryan: Was it the show last month (June) in Australia that did it?

Mark: There were a few things. The shows in Australia and Asia were definitely two contributing factors. I felt like the band had run its course.

Ryan: What's the situation with the Almighty Defenders (a group containing Khan, Sultan, and members of the Black Lips)?

Mark: We played one show a few days ago at a festival in Calgary. We were contractually obligated to play it. We did it without Khan. I don't think it's something we'd do again. We just had to get it done, but it was fun. I don't know what's going to happen in the future. We'll just have to give it some time. Maybe Khan and I will contemplate getting back together at some point. All fighting aside, we had some inkling that the band had maybe run its course; we had a plan to change some things up in the future. The same thing applies to the Almighty Defenders. Maybe time will heal some things. Khan and I had a tour lined up in the fall that we had to cancel. The future is always unpredictable. I have no idea what's ahead.

Ryan: The King Khan & BBQ Show was always a volatile group. It was certainly part of your dynamic. I was a bit skeptical at first when I heard the news that the band was over. I figured there was a good chance that you two would do something again in the future. You've worked together for so long.

Mark: We're like brothers. We talk and certainly don't hate each other. Shit happens. But in terms of working together, it's up in the air. We were volatile as a band. That was the point. There was supposed to be a balance there, though, and it went off the scale. If we can get back to where we were at the beginning then maybe we'll do it again.

Ryan: Undoubtedly, some people familiar with the King Khan & BBQ Show are unaware of the first band you played in with Khan, the Spaceshits (approximately 1995-1999). Can you contextualize what was going on in Montreal in the mid '90s? I think this is important to do because there have been a slew of good bands coming out of Canada over the past ten years and I feel that you and the people you were working with in the Spaceshits and Les Sexareenos are partially responsible for laying the groundwork of this great scene.

Mark: The Spaceshits was a band that Khan and I were in when we were young. There were some other dudes in the group who would later join up with me in Les Sexareenos (1999-2002). The Spaceshits was kind of a reaction to Montreal at the time. There has always been a good rock'n'roll scene in Montreal. But I think people had lost sight of it at some point. There was a really good punk scene in the '60s. There was some decent stuff in the '70s and good hardcore in the '80s. I remember going to hardcore shows in the late

'80s when I was a kid. I wasn't really into what was happening afterwards.

Everyone in the Spaceshits was pretty likeminded. One of the things we were into was really good rock'n'roll. The Spaceshits started before I joined. It was sort of a different band then. I'm really into spontaneity. Songs recorded in one take. The other guys in the Spaceshits were into that, too. We started everything fast—contacting places, going on tours. We'd play fifteen-minute shows and just destroy everything. Looking back on the Spaceshits, it was a fresh take on punk in Montreal. There were a few good rock'n'roll bands around at the time. Not many, though.

We really drew international attention to Montreal, whether people liked it or not. At the time, people were snobby and jealous of us. We were getting attention for playing punk rock. We did start something. Garage rock bands began popping up. I could be wrong, but I think we might have inspired bands to look beyond Montreal and start booking tours in other cities; getting attention in other places. I think we helped start a pretty popular scene. Then again, there are some great bands in Montreal who will likely never get attention, and other groups—not even necessarily from the city—who will exploit Montreal's scene to receive recognition.

Ryan: What you're saying resonates with me. About eight years ago, I vaguely knew a guy who would talk at length about two bands: Thee Midnitters from East Los Angeles and Les Sexareenos from Canada. Living in Southern California, I had no idea anything was happening in Canada at the time. Later on, I found out about groups like the Deadly Snakes and the Demon's Claws.

Mark: Yeah. After the Spaceshits stopped—Khan (bassist in Spaceshits) had moved to Germany ending the band—Les Sexareenos seemed to strike a note with people, too. It was more Sonics-influenced. People had been doing that sound for awhile. But they were typically older people. We'd be invited to play these Austin Powers-like festivals. We didn't really take it seriously. We just looked like scumbags. We caused trouble, drank too much, and took drugs. At that time we turned kids on to that music. It wasn't a popular sound then, but all of that shit is rock'n'roll to me. Aggressive hardcore, punk, free jazz. There's this anti-authoritative undertone in all these forms of music. It's all the same to me.

Ryan: Mike Watt always talks about music being a reservoir to dip into—jazz, punk, traditional rock'n'roll, etc.

Mark: Yeah. I'm not a big fan of that analogy, though, for some reason.

Ryan: Can you talk about your own development as a musician? I know prior to starting Les Sexareenos you had played drums before, but were you playing much guitar?

Mark: Prior to the Spaceshits I had played drums really poorly in some other bands as a kid. I didn't know I could sing at all when I joined the Spaceshits. I just told the guys in the band, "Oh, yeah, I'll sing for you." That's how I started singing. I certainly didn't know how to play guitar then. In Les Sexareenos I started

up drumming again and would sing at the same time. For songwriting in the Spaceshits I would play guitar like a bass—hitting single notes. I couldn't form a barre chord yet. When we were forming bands back then, nobody really knew how to play their instruments. We'd try to do the best or the worst we could, depending on the circumstance.

As I got older, and began getting more serious about writing songs for myself, then I started doing BBQ—the one-man band shit. I started doing that at the tail end of Les Sexareenos. I had to learn barre chords at that point. I was really frustrated with being in a band at that time. I wanted to play music by myself and not have to deal with other people. Through that I learned how to play a bit better. I'm a staunch believer, though, that some bands should never practice their instruments ever.

Ryan: What's your rationale behind that line of thinking?

Mark: Well, take my guitar playing for example. I can't play and I don't want to learn how to play past a certain level. It loses its creative nature to me. I prefer the sounds of people who don't know how to play. It's more honest to me. If you practice, it just seems like you're trying too hard. When I play, I want people to think they're hearing something better than what it is because I'm putting my heart into it. It's not about technical ability to me.

Ryan: That's an interesting mindset. The most obvious example of it would be Johnny Ramone. I know Colin Newman of Wire never practices guitar either. Your solo stuff and work with Khan is frequently referenced to the Velvet Underground. That interests me because there's something deeper seated there. The Velvet Underground had a drummer who was just learning to play when they started, and Lou Reed—although he'd write morbid songs—was a big fan of some of the old rock'n'rollers you're also influenced by. One of his favorite songwriters was Doc Pomus who wrote a lot of the Drifters' tunes. Reed was a big doo-wop fan and he was also limited on guitar. I agree with you. A lot of the best music comes from people with no delusions of grandeur. It tends to be very organic and not manufactured.

Mark: Totally. Consciously or subconsciously, my whole approach has always been to limit myself—with Khan and also in my one-man band. If you're limited, I think that's the way to bring up the most ghosts of rock'n'roll. I think with intense practice, you're no longer conjuring up these ghosts. It's not a bad thing, but it's taking it somewhere else. I've always wanted to share some sort of spiritual bond with my heroes. I play the music that I think is timeless. I try to come from the same mindset, and probably the same ability level, as my heroes. It's mostly preternatural, though.

Ryan: I see where you're coming from. I play music as well but I'm terribly limited. Your music is very accessible. The Velvets are accessible. Thee Midnitters are accessible. That's what draws me to this music. I think

there's some credence there with having a lot of theory kill spontaneity. It can lead to people over-thinking music. So, for instance, the idea that, "Well, if we're playing this chord in this style, as a bassist I should solely play the fifth, sixth, and the root of the scale and avoid the third because..." It seems like you've taken that Chuck Berry boogie-woogie riff and shown people, "Hey, look at all the amazing things I can do with just this one thing." It's really empowering.

Mark: That makes me happy. I've written songs before that are just one or two chords. It's not done purposely, but if that inspires a kid, that's great. It's inspiring to know that you can make good music out of seemingly nothing. Rock'n'roll should be fully accessible to people: music for the people, by the people. A lot of music is simple, but it can convey so much in its simplicity—simple music is more exciting to me than what some guy jerking off in an 800 track studio can achieve.

Ryan: That reminds me of Jay Reatard seeing the Oblivians for the first time. Or, the inspiration the Gories gave to people in the '80s and '90s.

Mark: That being said, I see the other side, too, like with experimental work or full instrumentation. I love doing that, too. But that's from a different school of thought. It's not the same thing. If you want to sound like rock'n'roll—get that emotion—simplicity is the way to go, I think.

Ryan: One reason why people might not be familiar with your back catalogue is because it's rather hard to get. Do you know if the Spaceshits and Les Sexareenos records are going to be available again? I don't really know what the situation is with Sympathy for the Record Industry right now.

Mark: I have no idea. Probably not. You can most likely download it. I know it's not in print. Bootleg it, I guess. Put it in print!

Ryan: It'd be great to see that stuff on vinyl again. I don't like any other format.

Mark: Me too. I don't know how hard it is to find that stuff. It is old, though. Some of that Spaceshits stuff came out in '95. And to some people that's ridiculously old. The last tour Khan and I did, there were a lot of kids who came out. I guess they don't know how old we are.

Ryan: You've been in the game for some time now.

Mark: Yeah. But I feel young, so fuck it.

Ryan: The one-man band route is harder to go down than people know. I imagine there must have been a learning curve.

Mark: It helped that I had already started singing and drumming in Les Sexareenos. It wasn't that hard. It might not sound like it. The main thing to get is the beat. It gets to be like dancing: you don't even think about it. And I play really percussive guitar; it's just another part of the drums for me. The singing is what I'm thinking about when I'm playing. Everything else kind of disappears. It's not as hard as it seems. It's such a stupid thing to do that most people don't even try it.

Ryan: I think it is hard. I haven't tried it. I have a friend who can play drums and guitar

and sing pretty well, and he told me he couldn't get it together all at once. You might be self-effacing or have a natural flair for it.

Mark: That's another thing about playing simple. If you're thinking about anything more than those three components, then you're definitely going to get fucked up. If you're worried about an upcoming part, say like a solo, well then that's when your mind is going to overtake what your body is doing, and it'll fall apart. I don't think I'm being self-effacing. I'm being honest. At least it's easy how I do it. It's like fucking and chewing gum at the same time. Which I don't advise.

Ryan: [laughs] That's a pretty good metaphor, though! Over the last eight years, you've been involved in a number of groups, but your two main ones have been the King Khan & BBQ Show and your solo project where you use your given name, Mark Sultan. What was the songwriting process like for you during that time? Did you feel that some songs would be better suited for one band over another, or was the selection of material all happenstance?

Mark: It was pretty happenstance. On some songs, though, I'm given limitations on what I can do as BBQ. For example, one song might have too many melodies or lines of rhythm. Right there I just stop myself and say, "Okay, I can't do this on my own." And songs where I envision more shit going on than usual and touching upon different genres, it would go to "Mark Sultan." The songwriting process with Khan was just a matter of us bringing material together. He'd write songs, I'd write songs. Sometimes we would work on them together. When we were together we could write songs in five minutes—everything but the lyrics. The same way I tend to write on my own. Quick and easy.

Ryan: It's interesting to hear how your songs differentiate with the addition of bass and outside percussion on your solo records. One of my favorite tracks that you've recorded so far is "Unicorn Rainbow Odyssey" off of *Sultanic Verses* (2007). It's a really beautiful song. I read in an interview you did previously for *Mongrel Zine* that the song was originally scheduled for use on the Mary Weiss album Norton released. It seems to me that the context you put it in worked better.

Mark: Jenna Roker sang on that one. Someone told me that Mary Weiss thought the original lyrics I wrote were too depressing. So I thought, "Okay, fuck it. I'll use it but change it up a bit." I gave Jenna fifteen minutes to rewrite the lyrics so she could come up with something that she wanted to sing, while using the original melody. She did it. We then recorded the vocal tracks in ten minutes. What you hear is what we got. I'm really happy with it.

Ryan: Incredible. In less than thirty minutes you delivered a lo-fi Shadow Morton-like production: street-level Whyte Boots. That's a great song.

Mark: Yeah. Again, that was just working fast. A song loses something if you spend too much time working on it.

Ryan: I interviewed Jay Reatard right around the time of *Blood Visions* (2006). Obviously, he'd work in a similar fashion. Jay said recording spontaneously worked for him and against. For him, in that he could record songs whenever he wanted to; against him in that his work would never appeal to many people.

Mark: I don't think about that stuff. I know what he's saying. You can't win them all. As much as I think some of the stuff I've written—had it existed in another time and in another dimension—would appeal to most people, I don't think about it. I write music I want to write. Hopefully the songs I come up with moves some people. That's what makes me happy.

Ryan: It's not often that we talk about the people behind the scenes. Larry Hardy over at In The Red has been releasing some incredible stuff for a long time now, and it seems like you've built a good relationship with him over the years. How has his support encouraged you?

Mark: Larry is older than me, but he feels like my brother. He's one of those guys who transcends everything. He's your biggest supporter and he's honest about music. We've built a good friendship. I imagine he gets so much crap thrown his way it's hard to listen to everything. The Deadly Snakes eventually got on In The Red. I remember being at Max Danger's place when Larry called. I told Max, "Ask Larry if he got that tape I sent." He just didn't listen to it. Now that I know him, it's a funny story. He's now a big supporter. But I've got to say, I wish he would hire someone else to help out.

Ryan: He's like you. He's a one-man band.

Mark: Yeah, but I've only got myself to worry about. And that's the way he wants to do it. I totally respect and understand that, but sometimes things get lost in the shuffle because there's not enough Larry to go around. But, he's definitely someone I respect with all my heart. His taste is great. Not just in music, but in movies as well. I look up to him. He's an awesome dude. If you talk with anyone who has dealt with Larry, they'll have a favorable opinion of him. He's like the Michael J. Fox of rock'n'roll.

Ryan: He's one of the few people I really like; one of the only friends that I have. He's done a lot of incredible stuff. I probably wouldn't have heard *Ode to Joy* by the Deadly Snakes had he not released it. His label just puts out such incredible stuff that you've got to listen to everything. You might miss something great otherwise.

Mark: In The Red is the kind of label where ninety-five percent of its releases are amazing. You listen to his releases more than ten times. He has a great track record.

Ryan: Although your usual influences are present, your recent Mark Sultan record, \$,



CANDERSON

I want people to think they're hearing something better than what it is because I'm putting my heart into it. It's not about technical ability to me.

was a different album for you, and I mean that in the best way—it's one of your best yet. Some of the songs sounded a bit more primal, particularly "Icicles," which has a Savage Republic-like drum beat. "Status" also has this great lo-fi "Jug Band Blues" ending; but instead of employing the Salvation Army Orchestra like Syd Barrett did, it sounds like you found the rawest-sounding trash can lids and beat them to hell. It has more affinity with the wonderful Shaggs or Red Krayola than a "legitimate" band. \$ also caught you working with your old Sexareeno pal, Choyce. What are your feelings about

the record? It certainly seems like a project you put a lot of thought into, regardless of whether you recorded it fast. Then again, you say you're good at fooling people!

Mark: Yeah, it is a "departure" I suppose. But, actually, this is a direction I am happy to finally pursue as Mark Sultan. I can always dig up graves as BBQ or in other more rock'n'roll projects. I am influenced by so much stuff and it seems a shame to waste it. I am really happy with how the album came out and how I was able to manipulate a 4-track cassette recorder in most songs. It sounded good to my ears. I'm getting older!

[laughs] These recordings are actually from a period starting in like 2008 or so. Not a lot of thought, but a lot of love went into them. I love working with Choyce. He and I really work well together and understand one another. We also share a lot of the same loves—in terms of music and bands.

Ryan: \$ was put out by Last Gang. Is it going to get a vinyl release?

Mark: Yeah. It should. It's pressed. It's just waiting to be shipped from the distributor. But who knows with my luck? I constantly have bad luck.

Ryan: Some artists, once they finish a record,

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It's like fucking and chewing gum at the same time.

that's it. They're done with it and they never really listen to it again. Other times, you'll find musicians who have an album that really sticks out to them more than the others. Whether it's the material on it or the circumstances involved in the recording process, that's the one for them. Is there a particular album that stands out to you or do you feel the same about all of them?

Mark: I really don't listen to one of my records again once I'm done with it. The last time I'll listen to it is probably right before it gets mastered. It's not because I don't like my albums. They're important to me; it's probably the closest I'll come to having a kid. It's like some schlub getting a tattoo or something: "I remember in '93 I fucked a transvestite and got this heart." These are experiences that I remember. For better or worse, they allow me to remember certain times. They're like movies or photographs in my head. If I hear one of them at a bar or whatever, it'll bring back the memories. When I play them live, a lot of memories and emotions come up. That's why I like playing live: bringing up a bunch of stuff at once. I guess I don't take this stuff as seriously as some people. I'm happy that I do it and I'll keep doing it, but that's about it.

Ryan: I know what you're saying. When I turn in an interview, there's a good chance I won't read it once it's in print. I've gone through the process, it's grueling, and now it's done. However, I was really proud to interview Jay Reatard. Right around the time of *Blood Visions*, the guy was on fire. Both he and Alicja Trout left an indelible mark on the Reigning Sounds' *Too Much Guitar* and he mastered your solo record, *Sultanik Verses*. To me, that was a great two-year span for the guy.

Mark: Yeah. Jay was a good friend. A good guy. I'm sure he'll be remembered for a long time for his incredible output. There was a period there where Jay and the people working with and around him, they were releasing such amazing stuff. A lot of friends sharing and working together. It was pretty cool.

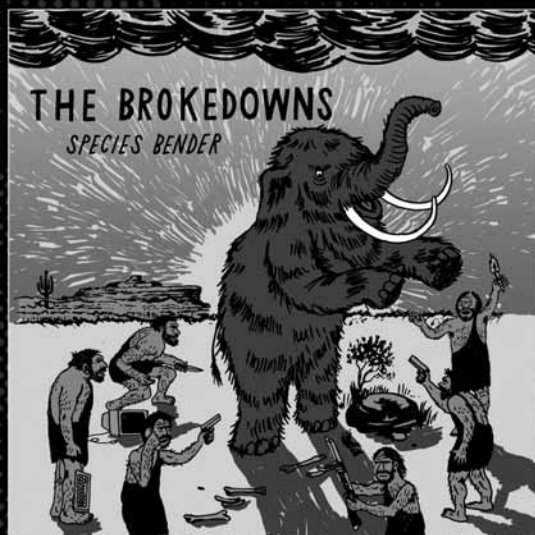
Ryan: You recently did a record with Bloodshot Bill under the name of the Ding-Dongs. I liked it because it was heavily influenced by rockabilly. I really love Billy Lee Riley. Some people have this aversion to rockabilly, but if you do it right, it's just as viable a genre as garage rock or whatever else. What's the deal with the Ding-Dongs?

Mark: We played our first show a few days ago. Jared from the Black Lips played with us and Dale from Hell Shovel, too. We just played a makeshift show at a festival. That



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band was never meant to be a major project, but I'd be stoked to tour it. We just recorded a bunch of material and said, "Oh, we should release this." The only problem with rockabilly is the fashion element of it. Early rockabilly is punk. It's fucking awesome. I have no problem with doing rockabilly music. Some rockabilly dude who gets an eight ball tattooed on his face—that fucking sucks. Rockabilly is not about fashion to me. It's about music. Some people might find rockabilly tired and cheesy at this point, but I don't. I don't consider that Ding-Dongs record rockabilly in a Sun Records sense. I think it's more rock'n'roll than anything else. I've always loved that early stuff, though. And Bloodshot Bill is a really good friend. And he does a lot more traditional rockabilly stuff. It was a fun collaboration. We recorded it in his basement. I haven't heard it, but I remember having fun with it.

Ryan: Totally. I think rockabilly has been neutered by people who make a caricature of it, who codify the genre. It's a very legitimate form of American music, and you and

Bloodshot Bill did a good job of it on your recent album.

Mark: Thanks. I think rockabilly music is a lot like '60s punk. I don't think there are any historical faux-pas. I'm not like one of those guys who took a side in the mods versus the rockers debate—I hope they kill each other. The past is the past. Rape the fuck out of it. Take the best elements from it and leave the rest.

Ryan: To me, that seems to be a really good synopsis of your career. Lou Reed is an example of someone who extracted great elements from past music and incorporated it into his own work. Greg Cartwright is an even better example. Greg is not concerned with stellar musicianship. The ability to extract the best material from all these great eras, and to make it current, that, to me, is the hallmark of someone intelligent and interested in creating great rock'n'roll.

Mark: Yeah. There are a lot of people who do past genres in tribute or in a retro way. But to me—any of the offshoots of rock'n'roll—they are current. They should never die. It's a timeless music. It should be as timeless as

classical music. Good rock'n'roll never has an expiration date.

Ryan: Certain cultures—especially those built around consumption—will try and fool you into thinking a past music is archaic in order to push some new genre on you. This is especially true of rock'n'roll which is marketed to a young audience. What's convenient about this type of marketing is that later on the old genre can be consumed under the title "retro" and it will not conflict with the new one to be consumed. I agree with you. Good music is good music just as good architecture is good architecture.

Mark: Yeah. It shouldn't matter. I wear the same clothes every day. I couldn't care less about fashion. Kudos to those who know fashion, but my take on fashion is just to be honest. I just want to make music that I like.

Ryan: What's going on with you right now, Mark? Your longtime vehicle, the King Khan & BBQ Show, has just ended. What's on the horizon? Are you going to put more focus on your Mark Sultan records while everything else sort of subsides around you?

Mark: I have no idea. I don't think about the future much. I don't care. Whatever comes—it'll come. I haven't been able to pursue the Mark Sultan stuff much because my time has been taken up by the King Khan & BBQ tours. Obviously, that's not a bad thing. I love doing that stuff. I might pursue the Mark Sultan material more. The reason I haven't thought about it was because my future was booked with the King Khan & BBQ Show. And now that it's not booked, it's too late to start booking up that time for my Mark Sultan thing. The breakup of the King Khan & BBQ Show—it was so quick.

Looking back, Khan and I never thought people would give a shit about us. Now, if one of us farts, it's up on some blog. It just escalated way too fast. Too many people knew what was going on. There were no private thoughts. That's the way it goes. If we get back together, it'll be a little while. Nothing is ever dead. I can't predict the future, but I do know that I'll still be into music and that I'll still be touring. To be honest, it might be a good thing to leave behind a lot of the notoriety. Things were getting too big. I mean, we're not Coldplay or some shit, but I'm from a punk background and things were getting a bit ludicrous. A lot of what was on the Internet—it wasn't accurate. I've been vilified for things that I didn't do. My friends and even family started believing what they read. I don't like that shit. I'm a very honest person. I would prefer it if people addressed me directly. There's nothing I can do once these rumors spread. The Internet blows things up and puts more fuel on the fire. It's annoying. If you love a band and their music, praise them instead of trying to pick them apart and destroy them. It is fun to kill your idols, but what happens when they're not around anymore?

NERVOUS GENDER

part I

I figure it's no secret by now that punk rock has its share of prejudices and stereotypes, many of which mirror those found in greater American society that deems deviation from the white, straight, male-dominated norm as "weak," "soft," and incapable of knocking you on your ass. Some of these prejudices have even been extended to choices in musical instruments, such as synthesizers. Despite being wielded quite effectively early on by bands like the Screamers, the Units, and others, the synth has been more or less relegated to the shit-pit of "unpunk," and using one is tantamount to rockin' an ocarina at a hardcore show: fuggin' insane in all the wrong ways.

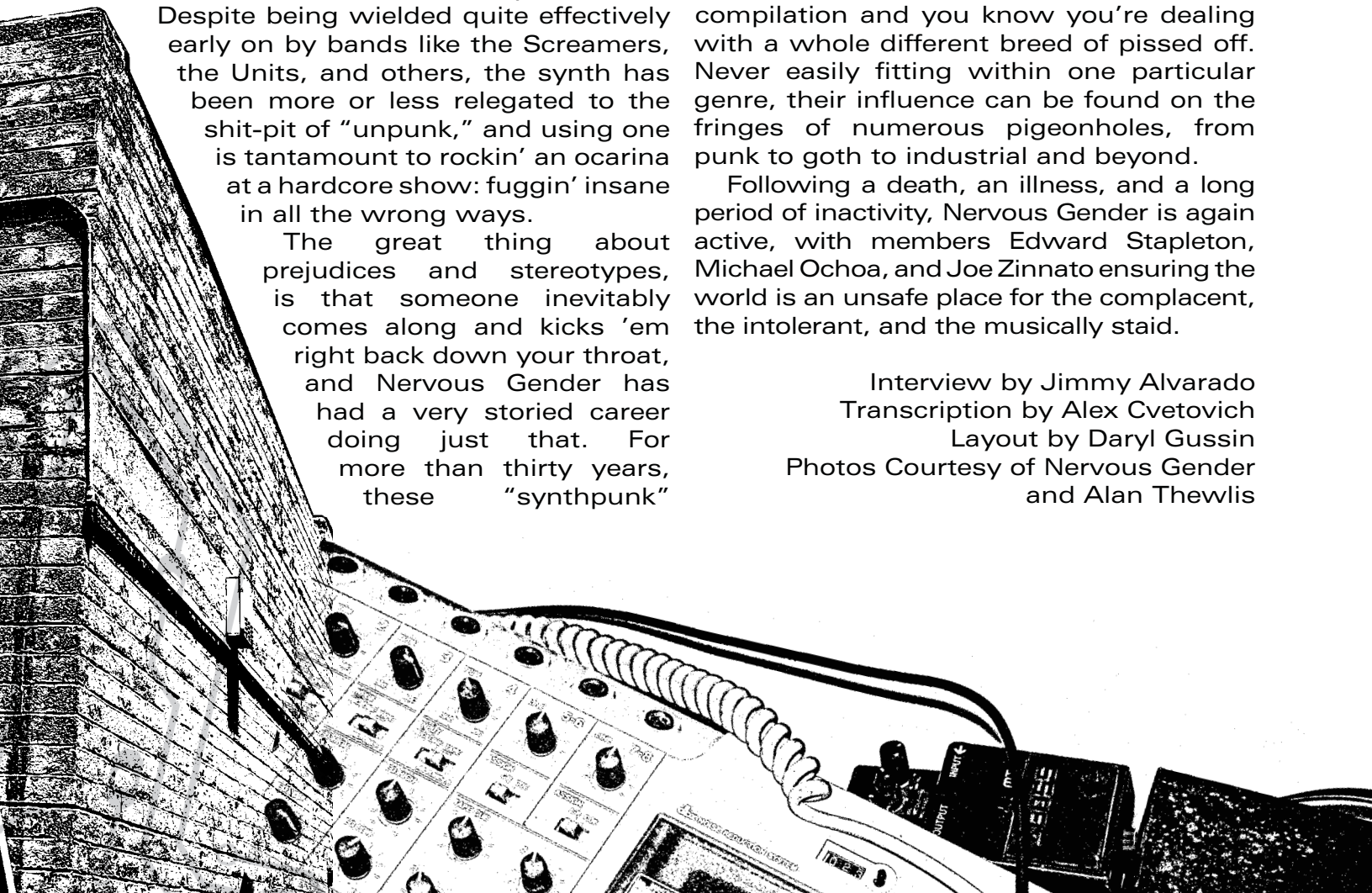
The great thing about prejudices and stereotypes, is that someone inevitably comes along and kicks 'em right back down your throat, and Nervous Gender has had a very storied career doing just that. For more than thirty years, these "synthpunk"

pioneers have attacked every taboo, every stereotype, and every preconceived notion about religion, sexuality, and punk rock that they've come across and have made their points using —GASP!—synthesizers to create a racket that would send the most ardent Black Flag fan scrambling in piss-panted fear for the nearest exit. One listen to their album, *Music from Hell*, or their tracks on the legendary *Live at Target* compilation and you know you're dealing with a whole different breed of pissed off. Never easily fitting within one particular genre, their influence can be found on the fringes of numerous pigeonholes, from punk to goth to industrial and beyond.

Following a death, an illness, and a long period of inactivity, Nervous Gender is again active, with members Edward Stapleton, Michael Ochoa, and Joe Zinnato ensuring the world is an unsafe place for the complacent, the intolerant, and the musically staid.

Interview by Jimmy Alvarado
Transcription by Alex Cvetovich

Layout by Daryl Gussin
Photos Courtesy of Nervous Gender
and Alan Thewlis





NERVOUS GENDER AT TARGET VIDEO, 1980. PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN

From the beginning, we said,
 "No, we aren't going to be
 easy prey for anybody."

Jimmy: Let's start with each of you: where you were born and raised, your family background, that kind of thing.

Edward: My name is Edward Stapleton. I was born in Dublin, moved to London in the '70s, and came to America just as punk rock was starting. My family were I.R.A. and housepainters. And alcoholics. [laughs]

Jimmy: And this inspired you how?

Edward: The whole Catholic thing did inspire the whole Nervous Gender, and then when I came to the United States, one of the first people I met was Gerardo (*Velasquez*, a founding member of Nervous Gender). I met him at, I think, a Screemers Show. At that point in time, I didn't know I shouldn't go to East L.A. Nobody told me anything, so I didn't have that barrier. When I went to East L.A., I met Michael. I related to Gerardo and

Michael because of Catholicism, though we were railing against it. It was a reference point for us. I didn't relate to white America, especially not Burbank.

Jimmy: That's where you were at, at the time?

Edward: Yeah, I ended up in Burbank. I was horrified. [laughs] I started hanging out in East L.A. with Michael and Gerardo.

Michael: And where are you now?

Edward: I'm back in Burbank, [laughter] but now I'm helping the poor in Burbank.

Jimmy: And you? [to Michael]

Michael: Michael Ochoa, I was born here in L.A. and grew up in East L.A. My parents were born in East L.A. My grandparents were both born in Northern California and Arizona, but we all kinda wound up here.

Jimmy: Where in East L.A. are you from?

Michael: Boyle Heights. And Gerardo, who

is the member that passed away, I met him in junior high.

Jimmy: Where, at Belvedere?

Michael: No, we went to Stevenson, and we became friends because we both had a fascination with, of all things, *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

Jimmy: What was it that attracted you to that?

Michael: [laughs] I don't know; we just liked the music. My family always thought I was so strange because the first record I ever bought was strange electronic music. It was Wendy Carlos, *Switched-On Bach*. I bought it in junior high, when I was fourteen.

Jimmy: You were into the synth thing very early, then?

Michael: Yeah. My family also thought I was crazy because I bought a stereo that was modular—I had a receiver—and they

GERARDO AND MICHAEL AT
CLUB 88, 1979, PHOTOGRAPHER UNKNOWN



We were already on the outside, which was apparent when punks were screaming at you, shouting “That’s not even fucking music! What are you doing?”

said, “Well, that’s not a stereo. It’s supposed to be in a big box.” It had a microphone out and headphone plugs, so I got a guitar cord, plugged the microphone into the headphones, and started making noise with that. I was probably sixteen, doing that kind of stuff. People would walk by the house and look really oddly at it because there was always this weird, feedback noise coming out.

Jimmy: When you were growing up in East L.A., what was the neighborhood like in that period?

Michael: Actually, East L.A. was kind of rough. There were lots of gangs going. They started getting guns, so we started hearing lots of bullet shots all the time. It was a rough time in East L.A., in the late ‘70s.

Jimmy: Were you aware of the Chicano movement that was going on during that period?

Michael: No, I wasn’t aware of politics going on. I was aware of all of the violence. [laughs] You had to be careful of everyone. You had to watch out for people in the street and watch out for the cops. Their first instinct was to tell you to get down on the ground and pull a shotgun on you, which happened once or twice with me. But I thought it was normal, not scary. It was, “Oh, that’s just the way things are”.

Joe: The drive-bys.

Michael: Not so much drive-bys. They were more gutsy then. They would actually come up with the gun... they would walk up to you. Or maybe they couldn’t afford cars. I don’t know [chuckles].

Jimmy: And Joe, where were you raised?

Joe: I’m Joe Zinnato, from Northridge, California. The (San Fernando) Valley.

Jimmy: And how did your upbringing influence your later progression?

Joe: Well, I went to Catholic school. I went to military school, so I think right there that taints everything. I was in private schools up until the last year of junior high. I went to Van Nuys High School. I was the only person in my family who read, or was interested in music or movies. They were all culturally void. I think because of my rebellion from Catholic school and military school, I just had a different outlook than them and the way I was raised.

Jimmy: So how did you guys get into punk rock?

Joe: Well I went to Van Nuys High, which

a couple of bands came out of: the Quick and the Dickies. Prior to that, there was the glamour scene. Punk from the Rodney’s Disco (Rodney Bingenheimer’s English Disco) seemed like a natural progression, and we were club kids. Punk came in from that, and everyone knew each other, so that’s how I got into it. Right out of high school, that was ‘77.

Jimmy: So you were around for The Masque and stuff.

Joe: Musically, I was intrigued by things like Lou Reed’s *Metal Machine Music*, Roxy Music, Eno’s noise and the background. Like Michael, I was making feedback on my stereo.

Jimmy: [To Michael] So how did you get into punk?

Michael: I actually learned more from watching PBS—that also made me weird, watching PBS—but I got into punk because I was watching a show on NBC called *Weekend*, I believe. They showed the Sex Pistols and had to put subtitles on it to show what they were saying. The next day I went out to, I think it was Tower Records, and bought the *God Save the Queen* single. Even before that, Gerardo was having an affair with a teacher at our high school, and she introduced us to Lou Reed and the Velvet Underground. That’s how I got into more alternative music. At the time, the only Velvet Underground records you could get were used, old copies. In fact, I got into CDs when they first came out because it was the first time I ever heard drums on *The Velvet Underground & Nico*. I had never heard drums on any of my copies of the Velvet Underground.

Jimmy: [To Edward] And you found it here, you said? You came from England, but it was right before punk...

Edward: Yeah, it was just starting to break then. I was going to an art school in Eastham, in England, and when I got to America, old friends would send me tapes. At that time, they were sending Ultravox and Sex Pistols. They were also really into Van Der Graaf Generator, Peter Hamilton, and stuff like that. I started looking for clubs in L.A., and that’s when I found the Masque. It was really through the mail that I discovered punk... I had heard about punk rock more than I’d been hearing it, at first because of the fashion, and then somebody sent me the cassette tapes. I was more drawn to electronic versions of

punk, and that’s why we ended up doing Nervous Gender.

Jimmy: The person who is obviously missing is Gerardo. Can you tell me about him, give a sense of the type of person he was?

Joe: He was *difficult*. [laughter]

Michael: He loved to argue. He loved to get a rise out of people, which led to me quitting the band more than once—or being fired, depending on who you talk to. Yeah, he was real difficult sometimes. He would argue for argument’s sake.

Edward: He lived in his head.

Michael: He was a genius.

Edward: He would like to take things and perverse them in some way or another. So he would never take anything as it was. He would have to put his spin on it. That could be really interesting, but could also be exhausting, as well.

Eastside Snappers

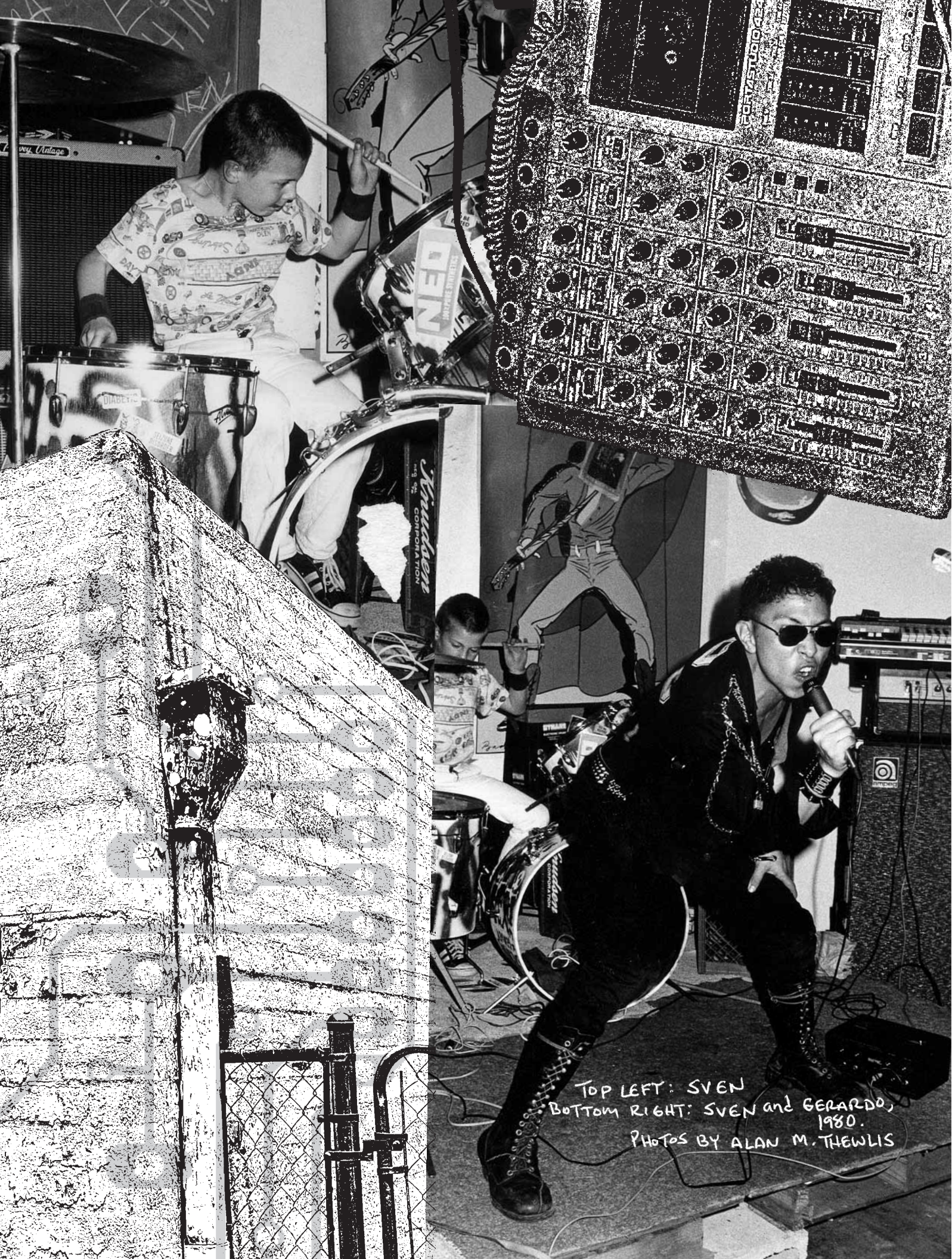
Jimmy: Was The Snappers your first band, or did you guys have one before that?

Michael: Well, we would get together with some old Magnus organs, and we’d play with that and with cassettes. I think by that time Gerard was making loops out of tape cassettes. We would make cassettes and just kind of fuck around. And then Gerardo met up with Robert (Becerra) and Jesse (Amezquita, aka “Jesse Fixx,” both members of The Stains), and he invited me over to meet them, and that’s how Snappers was formed.

Jimmy: That’s one of those bands that have kind of been lost. What can you tell me about that band?

Michael: I think we only did one show. I think we had only one rehearsal, or it was the second rehearsal, and the drummer quit. He hated what we were doing. Jesse moved to drums, Robert put a fuzz box on the bass, and Gerardo had an old synthesizer. Then he asked me to sing, so that’s how that formed. It was interesting stuff, but Jesse was so annoyed by what we were trying to do that he made sure that it self-destructed.

Jimmy: And that LACE (Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions) show that you guys did, that was for Gronk, I believe, right? (Jimmy is referring to the 10/31/78 art exhibition opening at LACE for visual artists Gronk and Patssi Valdez, both members of East L.A. performance art group ASCO. This



TOP LEFT: SVEN
BOTTOM RIGHT: SVEN and GERARDO,
1980.
PHOTOS BY ALAN M. THEWLIS

was The Snappers' last show and the night Edward met Michael and Gerardo.) Were you guys aware of ASCO and some of the performance and avant-garde ASCO artists from East L.A.?

Joe: I think Non (Non was/is a noise/industrial band headed by Boyd Rice and originally based in L.A.) played that night, too

Jimmy: Yeah, Monitor, too.

Michael: We met the Pasadena Art Mafia at that point, and connected with those guys really well. We liked those guys and started hanging out with them a lot.

Joe: They were all about the noise.

Jimmy: Do you remember the guys from ASCO?

Michael: I remember Gronk.

Jimmy: I know Gerardo had done some synthesizer stuff for some of the videos Harry Gamboa (another ASCO member) was making as well. ASCO was a performance art group from East L.A. and were tied in with a magazine called *Regeneración*. The muralist Willie Herron from Los Illegals was a part of that group, as well as Patssi Valdez and Gronk. There were all of these other groups going on, like Los Four, which was another muralist group, and some of the performance artists like Cyclona. I was just curious if you knew any of them.

Edward: I remember at one point I was coming home from work listening to KPFK, some station like that, and I heard, I thought our synthesizers. It turned out to be Gerardo working with someone else, but I knew the sound so well I thought it was a tape in the machine. It must have been the work that he was working with him on. It was definitely the Odysseys making shrieking noises.

Jimmy: You mentioned there was an L.A. punk scene and you didn't know there was an East L.A. scene. There were a lot of people from East L.A.—like you and Alice Bag—and all these people from East L.A. who were part of the Hollywood scene, and they weren't aware of a lot of the stuff happening at home.

Michael: Well, all of us were just kind of alienated from where we were, and we were trying to get away from it. The last thing we wanted to do was hang out in East L.A. Actually, Alice went to the same junior high that Gerardo and I went to.

Jimmy: Were you aware of, in trying to get out of East L.A., that there were these little pockets of stuff going on as well?

Michael: No, we weren't aware of it. The thing about it was, me and Gerardo were both gay, and the last thing we wanted to do was hang out in East L.A., where being gay wasn't the best thing. We weren't a part of any group there; we were always outcasts. We were always the ones getting really good grades in school, which made us more of the outcasts and no one talked to us. So, we just hung out by ourselves and started going to Hollywood. Then we heard the punk music. The first show I went to was at the Whisky... it was supposed to be the Ramones, but they cancelled at the last minute, because Dee Dee got stabbed or something. But we

wanted to go anyway, so we went and it was The Dickies, maybe the Bags, and some other band. We fell in love with going to Hollywood. The Hollywood scene was very embracing of everyone. It was very easy to be yourself in Hollywood. You couldn't be that way in East L.A.

Jimmy: I know that some of the later bands—the Illegals have been the biggest proponents of saying it—had a lot of difficulty getting gigs on the Westside, and feeling, I guess, part of that scene. In their case, they've gone so far as to say they were shut out from shows. If you look at the Brat, the Illegals, and These Undertakers, they would play an East L.A. night at the Roxy, instead of being incorporated into that scene. But that wasn't your experience?

Edward: Not for Nervous Gender

Michael: Not for me. I used to go to the clubs and go, "Hi, I'm Mike. I'm a fag." And they'd go, "Hey I'm so-and-so. I'm straight," and it was very easy to be yourself in the open. It always seemed like an open world to me. After a few years, when the Orange County groups started coming in, it got difficult, because a lot of these people had preconceived ideas of what punk was, but the earlier scene, '77, '78, '79, those people all felt they were outcasts, wherever they were. They weren't all from Hollywood. They were from all around the whole county, coming into Hollywood because that was a safe place to be. I noticed that a lot of these younger bands never made an effort to be friends with people in the scene, didn't come out to shows in the scene. I never saw them at shows, and the scene was small enough that when someone came in, you would notice them right away. If they had an attitude, then you avoided them. That was the case with the Orange County kids. They were so narrow-minded about what they thought music should be, what punk should be. You didn't want to associate with them. That might have been what was happening to some of the East L.A. groups.

Joe: I remember seeing East L.A. bands on bills with the Hollywood punk stuff. I never went to an East L.A. night. I saw all those bands, but I wasn't aware, however, there was an actual scene going on in East L.A. The Vex came along, but I can't even remember going there, though I probably did...

Michael: The Vex was literally four blocks away from my house and I think I went there once or twice. I felt very unwelcome.

Jimmy: In what way?

Michael: Because I was gay.

Jimmy: And this was the one over at Self-Help Graphics?

Michael: This one was located off Brooklyn—well, Caesar Chavez—and near Soto Street, across from Jack in the Box.

Jimmy: You're talking about Paramount Ballroom, the second one. There are stories about that as well. The first one was supposedly the utopian version of Vex, that's the one that was Self-Help Graphics, on the second story. The second one was the one at the Paramount, and that's where

all of the violence and the hardcore fun started happening.

Edward: Was there a big parking lot in the back of it?

Jimmy: That was the first one, on the corner of Brooklyn and Gage Avenue.

Edward: We did a show there with Wild Kingdom. They basically ignored us because we weren't rock and roll. [laughs] We weren't even punk rock in many ways.

The Birth of Nervous Gender

Jimmy: How did you guys get Nervous Gender together?

Michael: Well, I knew Gerardo and we were trying to do the Snappers, but that wasn't working.

Edward: It was at the night of the Snappers show at LACE that Gerardo was complaining about how he hated the band and wanted to do something totally different [chuckles]. So, while they were trying to set up he's like, "After the show, I want nothing to do with this band. Let's start a different band." Michael was standing next to him and said, "Okay, there is three of us. Now we'll get a fourth one." I remember seeing Frankie (Phranc, later a member of Catholic Discipline and a solo folk singer). So I said, "Oh, I know someone." She'll fit perfectly with the band name: Nervous Gender. I think they had already decided towards the end to move on, because there was so much aggression towards each other in the Snappers, even before they went on stage.

Michael: Yeah, well, it was just Jesse.

Jimmy: It's funny because I knew Jesse, and he was always kind of like that fly in the ointment: great grandiose ideas, very high opinion of himself, always just that guy who kind of tweaked everything.

Michael: If it wasn't in his scope of what it should be, he wasn't open to any opinion. Gerardo was kind of like that, too. [laughs] My sensibilities just fit more with Gerardo's than Jesse's.

Jimmy: What does it say in that *Slash* article about the LACE show, that you guys decided that you were going to kick everybody out that wasn't gay? [laughter] It was something like "We're going to kick all of the straight guys out of the band."

Edward: Yeah, we definitely reversed psychology. Gerardo liked also to reflect on what was done to him and said to him, and so when he would say and do things like that, a lot of it was to say, "This is how it feels."

Jimmy: So where did the name Nervous Gender come from?

Edward: I made it up. Just a combination, a moment in time where I was reading a book about Patti Smith and listening to Ultravox. The song was called "My Sex," and the first word I saw in the poem by Patti Smith was "nervous." The next sound I heard on the record was "gender," so I said, "Okay, this is the name of the band." Gerardo, sometimes, was very androgynous, so I thought it would make sense. I came from the glam rock scene, too, so I was still interested in Bowie and stuff

I wanted to synthesize what
Jimi Hendrix did with guitars.



PHRANC AT CLUB 88, 1979.
PHOTOGRAPHER
UNKNOWN

like that. I wanted a combination of electronic music, glam music, and punk music.

Jimmy: Was there any concept behind the band and the name at the time that you were consciously coming up with?

Michael: I don't think so. I think when the name came up it just seemed so natural for us, a natural fit. It really kind of encapsulated what we were all feeling at that moment.

Jimmy: Going back to the Velvet Underground, and not knowing there were really drums, was there a drummer in the original line up?

Joe: No. A drum machine.

Edward: Everyone kept saying we needed a drummer, so we argued about that for months.

Michael: And then Don Bolles (The Germs, Vox Pop, 45 Grave, Celebrity Skin) kept insisting he was going to be our drummer.

Jimmy: What was the creative process like for you guys back then? Was there one Svengali-type person?

Edward: Well, Gerardo and Michael had already done stuff together beforehand, and I did stuff on my own. Between the three of us, we mixed everything up together and came up with a lot of songs. The original songs were by Michael and Gerardo.

Michael: A lot of stuff would be like me telling Gerardo something that happened to me, and next thing I know, verbatim, it's a lyric in a song.

Edward: He was very obsessive about writing and creating, so everything that was done and said to him turned up somewhere.

Michael: When we put the music together it was always kind of like, "Okay, that sounds good." So, the songs would develop out of the lyrics and us fucking around with the music together. Of course, it helped that the synthesizers were always out of tune. It was always dissonant and noisy.

Jimmy: I know you guys were considered very confrontational in your presentation. Was that a conscious thing you were doing from the beginning?

Edward: Yeah, it was for me.

Michael: I never felt it was particularly confrontational. I just thought it was us venting.

Edward: That was the only way you were going to survive on stage, at that point in time. If you were going to say the things we were saying, you couldn't show any weakness. Already, people heard the name, questioned the sexual identity of the band, and gay people were put in the roles of being victims at the time—easy prey. From the beginning, we said, "No, we aren't going to be easy prey for anybody."

Jimmy: The attitude and the sound were contrary to the "soft boy" stereotype.

Edward: It was definitely "don't give them an inch," and nothing ever did come of it. We opened for bands like Fear and nothing ever happened in terms of the audience, but if we had shown vulnerability... I saw bands get eaten alive at that point in time.

Jimmy: My hearing is very limited to the stuff on the *Live at Target* compilation, and more recently a copy of *Music from Hell* on a burned CD, but the lyrics were also a

lot more direct and less nuanced. You were making a statement and it was very clear.

Edward: Oh, yeah. It wasn't just singing anything.

Michael: We were saying exactly what we felt. We had a song called "Mommy's Chest," and it was pretty much about stealing drugs from your parents.

Jimmy: Was there another version of that, like a demo version? I remember hearing one on Rodney on the ROQ that was a different version of it.

Edward: Yeah, there are a couple of versions out there. There's one actually of Paul Roessler (a former member, Screamers) singing "Mommy's Chest."

Joe: The one that Rodney played was, I think, from the Western Studio.

Jimmy: Yeah, that had Phranc singing on there. I remember that, and I heard the one that you had on your website from a show at the Hong Kong Café and I didn't think that was the version I'd heard.

Edward: No, the original version was screamed and very fast.

"Just Give Them the Money to Go..."

Jimmy: Did the band ever come into any kind of trouble resulting from any of the performances you guys were playing? Was there a specific gig that stands out in your head as the quintessential reaction to you?

Michael: My favorite early show was at Club 88. We told ourselves, "Oh, let's all wear white." Phranc knew a lighting guy who had movie lights, so we brought movie lights. I think we decided last minute to point the lights to the audience instead of at us. It was my favorite show. For months, every time we did a show, people showed up with dark glasses because they were afraid we were going to hit them with lights, interrogate them. [laughter]

Jimmy: Did you guys experience any kind of overt discrimination because of your ethnicity or your sexual orientation? The punk scene, especially the hardcore scene, could be very puritanical, kind of narrow minded. Did that ever become a problem or an issue for you guys?

Edward: It was there, but it was nothing we were ever concerned about.

Michael: Or cared about.

Edward: We were already on the outside, which was apparent when punks were screaming at you, shouting "That's not even fucking music! What are you doing?" and they're appalled by the aggression and the sound. When we started Nervous Gender, I think most of us thought we would do five shows and that's as much as people would tolerate. We were surprised we got such a good response, and there was a lot of press and people were interested. We knew we were saying and presenting something that wasn't quite the same as everybody else. It was in the same genre and had the same energy, but it wasn't the same subject matter as punk.

Michael: That's what was really cool about the early punk scene in L.A.—the fact that

all the bands were punk, but they all sounded completely different. They didn't sound like the hardcore bands did later, where they all sound the same. Every band, you'd hear the first few notes and you'd go, "Oh, that's X, that's the Bags, and that's Nervous Gender."

Jimmy: They weren't playing to a template, per se.

Michael: No, they were trying to express themselves. They weren't trying to be rock stars. That was never my intention, to become a rock star. I think one of the funniest shows, though, was San Diego.

Edward: They paid us to stop.

Michael: Was it one song?

Jimmy: Was it at the college?

Edward: No, some bar in the downtown area. We get there and there's nobody there except the waitresses, the owner, and a few drunk people. We brought a few people with us from L.A., but they were all underage, so they had to stay in the dressing room. We did one song and the waitresses put their tips together to get us to leave. They went up to management and said, "Just give them the money to go." I remember, seventy-five dollars, and it was more than we got paid when we did a normal set on a normal day. We actually got paid more for leaving.

Michael: When we had Sven, our seven-year-old drummer, we were playing Blackies on La Brea, and we had to sneak him in a kick drum case because he was underage. It was a bar, and we had to sneak him in. When the show started, he came out and started drumming.

Edward: You were talking about the conflict some people felt being from East L.A. or from Hollywood... the conflict I mostly saw was people from San Francisco and people from L.A. That was really obvious. When we would go up to San Francisco, their idea of a compliment was, "You seem like you're from here and not from there." It was actually in San Francisco where we got a bigger audience and the opportunity to record. We couldn't get that in L.A. San Francisco was more open to what was happening in industrial music, or art damage. L.A. wasn't quite as open.

Jimmy: A lot of people thought Nervous Gender was from San Francisco.

Edward: Yeah, they still do

Jimmy: You kind of fit into all these different cultures and all different nooks. The industrial kids got into you, even the death rock kids embraced you. At the same time, you didn't really fit in with any of them.

Edward: Now we see this, but at the time we weren't really aware of any of that stuff. It's now that I get e-mails from people from all genres of music, even no-wave people.

Michael: Yeah, they started calling us a no-wave band our second gig. "L.A. answers to no wave."

Jimmy: The funny thing was, back then, there were pigeonholes, but everything was "punk," whereas now it's been sliced and diced so that there's templates of sub-templates and sub-templates of sub-templates. Like, the whole grindcore thing. That would have been hardcore in the mid-eighties. Now,

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it's grind/mince/thrash, all these ridiculous little pigeon holes. You always kind of struck me as one of those bands who could fit on any bill, but you didn't fit on any of them.

Edward: It was always difficult to figure out who we should play with.

Jimmy: But you could play with anybody.

Michael: It was really strange too... a band like Wall Of Voodoo was real supportive of us, and their music was so beautiful in a really strange way, and we're so dissonant, but they loved us. They would always show up to our shows and had us play a couple times with them.

Edward: We would open for Wall Of Voodoo periodically. They loved it, but their crowd hated it.

Jimmy: With regards to the earlier stuff, obviously you were aware of the Screamers. Was it a situation where you were influenced by the Screamers, or was it more like having the same idea?

Edward: I was influenced by the Screamers. Michael and Gerardo were total Bags fans, not interested in the Screamers.

Michael: I liked the Screamers. By that time in the band we had already developed our sensibilities of what we liked in synthesizer music. We had been listening to that stuff for years. Yeah, they were doing synthesizer music and we loved what they were doing, but we had already developed.

Joe: Yeah, it was completely independent.

Jimmy: Wasn't a matter of, "Well, the Screamers are doing this and that sounds like a good idea?"

Michael: No. I was always telling people I wanted to synthesize what Jimi Hendrix did with guitars. Just push out the noise part of it. There are melodies in there. At the time, people weren't used to synthesizers, and they couldn't hear the melodies in the music. Nowadays, over twenty years later, you can hear it because people have gotten used to that sound. Now when you play a synthesizer, it's not noise to you anymore because ears are tuned now to hear the melodies.

Edward: There were points when people would say to me, "You just make it up as you go along. You never practice, do you?" They did not hear nor realize that those were songs with a beginning, middle, and an end, that we knew when to start and when to stop. Everything in between was sometimes up for grabs, but they would only hear it as pure noise.

Jimmy: How did the relationship with Subterranean come about? How did you get hooked up with the San Francisco crowd?

Edward: We'd go up to do shows in San Francisco. The first time we went up there, we knew one person, Brad (Lapin), who had a magazine called *Damage*. He said come up and do a show. When we got up there, we're walking down the street and there's posters for Nervous Gender doing a show that night, and people were already excited we were coming. We weren't used to that. Right off the bat, Target Video was interested. Subterranean was interested, and when they had projects they'd ask "Do you want to

participate in this?" I don't think we ever got any opportunities in L.A. from anybody to be on any record, recording, video, nothing.

Michael: Target wanted to do a video and I think Subterranean attached itself to that, and that's why we were recorded by Subterranean, because we were doing the *Live at Target* video.

The Tale of Sven the Drummer

Jimmy: How did you guys end up with an eight-year-old drummer? Was it a gimmick...

Joe: [joking] A total gimmick! [laughs]

Jimmy: ...or a statement on Don Bolles's ability to play drums?

Edward: [laughing] We had to find somebody as equally talented as him! We went to San Francisco. Don decided he was going to do the show with us and at the last minute he didn't turn up. So we said, "We're just going to do the show. We've performed without drummers before. We'll do it again." We got to San Francisco and we were worried because it had been a long time without playing without a drummer, but the drummer from the Dead Kennedys improvised for us. He did one rehearsal. We did the show that night, and we bashed around a lot.

In the audience was Sven and his mother, who just got over from Germany, and he was running around with this toy gun, pretending to shoot everybody. The show was pretty bad. We didn't do very well, and so Gerardo was screaming at the end of the set, "This kid's got the right idea, we should be shot! This is the worst performance," you know? [laughter] Then, when we went back to sleep that night, Sven and his mother were also staying at Target studios. For the few days we were there, we all hung out together, and when we said we were going back to L.A., she said, "Would you give me a ride back?" We said, "Sure, we can drop you off in L.A.," thinking she knew somebody in L.A. We drove eight hours, got back to L.A., and she asked, "Can I stay with you? I know nobody in L.A.!" She moved in with me for a while. Then she moved in with our manager, and so Sven would always be there when we were rehearsing. I think Nickey Beat (Weirdos, L.A. Guns) had an old drum kit in the room, so he started bashing it one day as we were going through the set. We said, "Okay, want to be in the band? You're here all the time," and his musical ability wasn't any less than ours. When we started, [laughs] even to today, it wasn't about being musicians, so it wasn't a criteria. I didn't consider it a gimmick. It was just more like, "Why not?"

Jimmy: What was it like to practice with him, given an eight-year-old's attention span?

Edward: [everyone is laughing] Well, we didn't put a lot of pressure on him. If he wanted to go watch TV during a song, we were like, "Go ahead. Come back when you're bored."

Jimmy: Play a song, go watch *Speed Racer*, and come back when you're ready!

Edward: He loved really horrible American cartoons. He would imitate them in a German accent, of course. We have some footage of him at KPFFK. In that case, he was crying because he couldn't keep up with us... Sometimes he would cry on stage. [in a German accent] "You're going too fast!" [everyone laughs]

Michael: It was really bad because Gerardo's whole concept of what to do was play as fast as possible. He went from one extreme to the other. The very early Nervous Gender stuff was as fast as you could go. Then, all of a sudden, he switched gears, and for all the songs he'd say, "You're going too fast. Too fast. It's still too fast." [laughing] What the fuck!

Jimmy: The kid lasted a couple of years. Did you guys play a lot of shows with him?

Edward: We did the recording for *Live at Target* with Sven, and that was four songs.

Michael: By that time Paul Roessler from the Screamers had joined us too. **Edward:** He was playing a stop sign with pickups, and it went through something.

Michael: It went through a synthesizer, and it helped with the rhythms.

Edward: Then one day Sven's mother got in trouble for something, and they deported them both back to Germany.

Jimmy: That's how he got out of the band then? [laughter]

Edward: Yeah, that's how he survived!

Jimmy: You guys were sitting around then going, "Fuck, we're out of a drummer, again!"

Joe: Then Don came back.

Michael: He missed us so much...

Jimmy: Who's Bill Cline?

Michael: My replacement!

Edward: He was somebody Gerardo met at a PiL show. They had a good conversation, didn't even know he could play a note, and went, "Oh, do you want to be in the band?" He actually could play some, so he came in and did a couple of shows. He had some emotional problems... I think his therapist, at some point, told him that this wasn't a healthy place to be [laughter]... He started having fears of burning in hell and all this stuff. We were all enjoying the idea of burning in hell, but he took it very seriously.

Jimmy: This is ironic, because you figure it would be kind of like a primal scream therapy.

Michael: Fact was Gerardo could increase your anxiety level really easily.

Jimmy: Sven, have you heard from him?

Edward: I haven't heard from him at all. He might be an architect in Germany, somewhere. He never went to school in California, so I'm hoping when they went back to Germany she gave him a better opportunity to be educated.

Joe: Yeah, there have been no attempts on his part to contact us. [laughter]

Michael: I wonder why!

Edward: [an exasperated exclamation in a German accent] "Why did I ever play drums for you?!"



TOP FIVES

RAZORCAKE STAFF

Adrian Salas

Five Sure-Fire Songs to Put on in the Car to Save a Sinking First Date
5. Ramones, "Baby I Love You"
4. Cheap Trick, "I Want You to Want Me" "He's a Whore"
3. Elton Motello, "Jet Boy, Jet Girl"
2. Dicks, "Saturday Night at the Bookstore"
1. Slayer, "Dead Skin Mask"

Art Ettinger

• Todd Congelliere, *Clown Sounds* LP
• The Thermals, *Personal Life* LP
• Hot New Mexicans, Self-titled LP
• Icon Gallery, Self-titled LP
• Touch and Go: *The Complete Hardcore Punk Zine '79 - '83* (Book)

Ben Snakepit

Top Five MAME Roms
1. Hotdog Storm
2. Psycho Soldier (just for the song)
3. Crude Buster
4. JJ Squawkers
5. Bad Dudes Vs. Dragon Ninja

Bill Pinkel

• Hex Dispensers, *Trouble in Mind 7"*
• The Spits and Nobunny, live at the Echo
• Statues, everything I've been able to get my hands on
• Crusaders Of Love, *Never Grow Up* LP
• The Measure [sa] / New Bruises, split 7"

Billups Allen

Top 5 Cover Songs
1. Fear, "Hoochie Coochie Man"
2. The Minutemen, "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Love"
3. Electric Frankenstein, "I Was a Punk Before You Were a Punk"
4. The Sex Pistols, "Substitute"
5. His Name Is Alive, "The Man on the Silver Mountain"

Bradley Williams

Bands from the July Hippy Riot tour with Bombon
1. Lenguas Largas (Arizona)

2. Rise Up Howlin Werewolf (Alabama)
3. Pigs (Oakland)
4. Echo (Texas)
5. Taylor Hollingsworth (Alabama)

Bryan Static

• Tiltwheel, *The High Hate Us*
• Sass Dragons, *New Kids on the Bong*
• Sundowners, *Gnome & Glaciers*
• Statues, *Holiday Cops*
• Iron Chic, *Not Like This*

Chris Pepus

• *Reel Injun* (film)
• "Obama's War," a lecture by Tariq Ali (www.lrb.co.uk/2010/04/19/tariq-ali/obamas-war)
• *Kolchak: Night Stalker of the Living Dead* (comic book series)
• *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (film)
• *Phaedra's Love* (play)

Craig Horky

1. Frank And Earnest, *Old Francis*
2. Bruce Springsteen, *Nebraska*
3. Natural Disasters, Self-titled
4. Tin Horn Prayer, *Get Busy Dying*
5. Daddy Rockin Strong, *A Tribute to Nolan Strong*

CT Terry

1. Captain, We're Sinking, *It's a Trap 7"*
2. Roc Marciano, *Marcberg* LP
3. La Roux, Self-titled LP
4. Paco Ignacio Taibo II, *No Happy Ending* (novel)
5. chrislterry.com

Craven Rock

5. *On Losing a Friend* (zine)
4. Pine Away, *Barefoot Feeling* (tape)
3. Olytopia camp at the Autonomous Mutant Festival
2. My vasectomy
1. Colton-Harris Moore (outlaw/folk hero)

Daryl Gussin

• Black Wine, Self-titled LP + live
• Crusades, Self-titled 7" + live
• Sopors, *Golden Era #267* + live
• Libyans, *A Common Place* LP
• Knights Of The New Crusade, *Knight Vision* CD

Designated Dale

Top 5 Disgusting "Foods," As Witnessed at the Orange County Fair In Costa Mesa, CA.

1. Deep fried butter (!) Yeah, this would be great to chow down on, right before I shoot freshly popped popcorn out of my ass, then everyone wins! Yeesh.
2. Chocolate covered bacon. Come now; maple crème dipped, possibly, but chocolate? How dare you foul the supreme taste of these two food heroes?!
3. Zucchini Weenie. A hollowed-out zucchini that acts as a condom for the ample wiener that's stuffed inside it and thrown in the deep fryer. Gag, choke, splash. Thanks, I just vomited.
4. Deep fried White Castle sliders. As if the normal WC sliders don't make one's ass bark at the porcelain moon, these stomach-turning pucks of muck will have your buttocks hiccupping putrid puddles in no time.
5. Deep fried avocados. What did the avocado ever do to you to receive such disrespect and be treated so poorly as this? *Shame* on you.

Mademoiselle Ever

a.k.a "the girl about town"

- Bombon, *Las Chicas Del...* LP
- The Spits, free show in a airplane hanger@ the Santa Monica airport
- Devo, show @ Hollywood Park Racetrack
- Thee Undertakers @ The Redwood Bar
- Las Sangronas y El Cabron, Demo

Ian Wise

Top 5 Things That I Am Stoked On

1. My son running around a children's museum in firefighters overalls and talking to a little girl in a Ramones dress.
2. The staff of the Reckless Records on Madison/that cute girl at the Reckless on Broadway.
3. Old guys giving me old records.
4. The Spring Street Firehouse
5. Ryan FCS becoming an honorary southerner.

Jake Shut

Five Books by Geographers Everyone Should Read

- Neil Smith, *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification and the Revanchist City*

- David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*
- Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*
- Kenneth Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*
- Lees, Slater & Wyly, *Gentrification*

Jeff Proctor

5. The Spits, Tokyo Electron, *Stalins Of Sound @ the Kensington Club, San Diego, July 24th*
4. The Spits, Nobunny, *Audacity @ The Echo, Los Angeles, July 25th*
3. Destruction Unit, Mexico City Rollers, *Stalins Of Sound @ The Tower Bar, San Diego, August 7th*
2. The Spits, Personal And The Pizzas, *Slab City @ Spaceland, Los Angeles, August 15th*
1. Pavement and Sonic Youth @ the Hollywood Bowl, Los Angeles, September 30th!

J. Federico

Top 5 Records I Picked Up in Denmark

1. De Høje Hæle, *Skal Vi Aldrig Videre?*
2. P. J. Bonneman, *Jeg Kendte Dem Ikke 7"*
3. Dansetten, *Mask Rouletta*
4. No Hope For The Kids, *Das Reich 7"*
5. Masshysteri, *Vår Del Av Stan*

Jim Ruland

1. Go to Goner Records and bug Eric and John with questions about Memphis punk
2. Eat beef brisket at Central BBQ in front of a fan the size of a jet engine
3. Go to the Hi-Tone Cafe and see the Arrivals and Off With Their Head (and feel badly about missing River City Tanlines the next day)
4. Wander around Burke's Books
5. Replenish fluids with Coffee Shop iced tea that's nine parts sugar one part tea

Joe Dana

Top 5 Funniest Razorcake Interviews from Issue 36 (When I Started Subscribing)— Present

5. Future Virgins #41: "Man, these questions are difficult for a GED recipient"
4. Tiltwheel #50-52: "Her butthole is fucking disgusting"
3. Brokedowns #52: "Stay in your room. If you need anything,

Don't be too loud and if you're gonna puke, puke out the window.

let me know. Don't be too loud and if you're gonna puke, puke out the window"

2. Sass Dragons #47: "A brutal melee of butts and penises"

1. Dude James #56: "Billy Ray (Cyrus) is down for life, man"

Joe Evans III

1. Max Levine Ensemble, *Them Steadily Depressing...* 7"
2. Big Eyes, Demo
3. Various Artists, *Coffee Stains and Cigarette Burns* CD
4. Grabass Charlestons, live
5. Big Lake

Joshua Ian Robles

1. Edward Sharpe and the Magnetic Zeros, "Home"
2. Weezer, "Let It All Hang Out"
3. Year Zero, "Haunted"
4. Polysics, "Electric Surfing Go Go"
5. Social Distortion, "I Was Wrong"

Juan Espinosa

1. American Cheeseburger / Bukkake Boys, Split EP
2. Young Offenders, *Leaders of the Followers* 12"
3. The Shitty Limits, "Last Orders" b/w "Selling Point" EP
4. Plutocracy, *Off the Pigs* 12"
5. The Mean Jeans T-shirt I ordered from Dirtnap

Garrett Barnwell

1. The Power of the Riff Fest 2010
2. *Touch And Go:* *The Complete Hardcore Punk Zine '79-'83*, by Tesco Vee and Dave Stimson (book)
3. Marked Men, *On* 7"
4. *Dice Magazine* #33
5. Red Dead Redemption (game)

Keith Rosson

- The Effort, *Wartime Citizens* CD
- Concrete Blonde, live on KCRW, 4/23/87
- Pioneer Memorial Museum in Douglas, Wyoming
- *Seven Inches to Freedom* zine
- Swimming and canoeing in the Grand Tetons

Kurt Morris

1. Osker, *Idle Will Kill*
2. Strand Of Oaks, *Pope Killdragon*
3. Notorious B.I.G., *Life after Death*
4. Notorious B.I.G., *Ready to Die*
5. *Welcome to Flavor Country* #21 (zine)

Lauren Measure

- Des Ark, "Which of You Assholes Ate Christmas"
- The New Dress, "Hey Kid"
- Aye Nako (formerly Fleabag), "Bent Out Of Shape"
- RVIVR, "Real Mean"
- P.S. Eliot, "Sadie"

Lisa Weiss

Five Experiences on My Summer Vacation That Made Me Proud to Be an American, I Mean, from the U.S.

1. Landon Donovan's last-second goal against Algeria in the World Cup
2. Turkish Techno in Chino and Riverside
3. Fish and chips and Guinness on the 4th of July in Brooklyn
4. 150 varieties of soda available from the programmable machine at Rubio's in Irvine, Calif.
5. Old friends and a new pool in San Diego

Marcos Siref

- Eskera, Self-titled, download EP
- The Transgressions, *Waste My Time*
- Titus Andronicus, *The Monitor*
- Tender, *Rough C16* cassette/download
- Lost Sounds, *Black Wave*

Matt Average

- Systematic Death / See You In Hell split EP
- Executioner, *Hellbound* EP
- Nu Sensae, *TV, Death, and the Devil* LP
- Much Worse, *Proper Execute* EP
- Total Abuse, live and *Mutt* LP

Megan Pants

- Top 5 Things to Do on a Monday Afternoon in August*
- see Shang-a-lang
 - have a root beer float
 - see Das Kapital
 - see Future Virgins
 - see Grabass Charlestons

Mike Faloon

1. Black Wine, Self-titled LP
2. Sharon Jones, *I Learned the Hard Way* LP
3. Night Birds, *Killer Waves* 7"
4. Night Birds, *Prognosis: Negative* 7"
5. Superchunk, *Digging for Something* 7"

Naked Rob

- The Thrash Attack
1. Early Graves, *Goner* (R.I.P. Makh Daniels)
 2. Burning Love, *Songs for Burning Lovers* LP (fast punk)
 3. White Lung, *It's the Evil* LP (L.A. punk in Vancouver, BC)
 4. Acephalix, *Aporia* LP (metal punk)
 5. Masakari, *The Prophet Feeds* LP (brutal crust)

Nardwuar The Human Serviette

1. Nu Sensae, *TV, Death and the Devil* LP
2. Sex Church, *6 Songs by Sex Church* 12"

3. The Pack A.D., *We Kill Computers* CD
4. Devo, *Something for Everybody* CD
5. Various Artists, *Bloodstains Across Alberta* 7"

Nick Toerner

- Holy Shit!, *K.B.D.O.O.P.* LP
- Sass Dragons, *New Kids on the Bong* CD
- Toys That Kill / Grabass Charlestons, split LP
- The Manix, *Van Activities* 7"
- The Reds beating the Cardinals in the NL Central this year (fuck you, Nighthawk)

Nighthawk

- Windy City Sound Clash
- Throwing up in a car wash
- Tunnel Rats, *Run for Your Life* 7" (thanks Andy Junk!)
- Printing Daryl's first *Dudes Magazine* article
- Teen Idols, *Old Days, Old Ways* 7"

Rene Navarro

1. Masshysteri, Self-titled LP
2. Lenguas Largas, *Lonely Summertime* 7"
3. Swingin Utters, *Five Lessons Learned* CD
4. *Fifth Business* by Robert Davies (book)
5. Watching Coliseum, Trap Them, and From Ashes Rise at the Echoplex with my little brother.

Rev. Nørh

- Sweet, The: *Live in Denmark 1976*: LP
- Bare Wires: *Seeking Love*: LP
- Goodnight Loving, The: *Supper Club*: LP
- Candy Snatchers: *Down at Delilah's*: LP
- Eric Davidson: *We Never Learn: The Gunk Punk Undergung 1988-2001* (book)

Russ Van Cleave

- Top 5 on the Heavy Rotation Shelf*
1. Fleshes, *Brown Flag*
 2. Charlie Rich, *Lonely Weekends* (the one that came out on Mercury, not the one on Sun)
 3. Black Sabbath, *Master of Reality*
 4. Sick Sick Birds, *Heavy Manners*
 5. Tampa Red, *Guitar Wizard*

Ryan Horky

1. Superchunk, "Digging for Something"/"February Punk" 7"
2. Raw Power, *You Are the Victim* LP
3. Necros, *Conquest for Death* LP
4. Brutal Truth, *Extreme Conditions Demand Extreme Responses* LP
5. Bottomless Pit, *Blood under the Bridge* LP

Samantha Beerhouse

1. TTK, Sick Sick Birds, and O.G. Tiltwheel @Harold's, on a drunken Thursday night
 2. *The Baroque Cycle* by Neal Stephenson
 3. Clifton's Cafeteria for Joe Dana's DTLA Birthday Special
 4. Statues, *Terminal Bedroom*
 5. (predictions of awesomeness)
- Tie: North Park Awesome Fest, Mummies of the World @ the CA Science Center

Sean Koeppenick

- Top 5 Bands That I Am Stoked to See at Riot Fest 2010*
1. The Bhopal Stiffs
 2. OFF!
 3. Zero Boys
 4. Explode And Make Up
 5. The Effigies (original lineup)

Steve Hart

1. Amebix, *Redux*
2. Te Vaka, *Haoloto*
3. Maui Adult Baseball League
4. Christopher Moore, *Bite Me*
5. Grand Rapids Is Screaming (website)

Steve Larder

1. Godflesh, *Streetcleaner*
2. Swans, *The Great Annihilator*
3. Kowloon Walled City, *Turk Street*
4. Dropdead, second LP
5. Bastard, *Wind of Pain*

Todd Taylor

- Masshysteri, Self-titled LP
- El Banda, *Skutki Uboczne* double LP
- Marvelous Darlings, "I'll Stand by Her" b/w "Friend of a Friend" 7"
- Young Offenders, *Leader of the Followers* LP
- Year Zero, *Year One* CD
- Egghead, *Would Like a Few Words with You* CD

Ty Stranglehold

- Top 5 "P" Bands*
1. Poison Idea
 2. Public Enemy
 3. Pixies
 4. The Pricks (Victoria B.C.)
 5. Pointed Sticks

Vince Battilana

- Stoned At Heart, *Party Tracks Vol. 1* LP
- Unnatural Helpers, *Cracked Love and Other Drugs* LP
- Sleepies, Self-titled LP
- Megacools, *Introducing the Fun Police* LP
- Rag Rage, *Good, Wholesome, and Sexy* LP



2009: *The Future Is Soon*: LP

The packaging for this is friggin' awesome: an old sleeve sliced up, turned inside out, and hand-painted and screened. How rare to see such personalization, even in a D.I.Y. world! And how ecologically sound! Soooo...2009 is a two-piece (drums and guitar) comprised of dudes from Rock Paper Stupid and playing stripped-down punk tunes that are surprisingly sophisticated at times. Their sound is speedy and trashy, but there are some nice poppy hooks in there and an intricacy to the guitar that is somewhat veiled at first by the low-fi recording. This record seemed rather one-dimensional on my first listen, but added nuances revealed themselves with each subsequent spin. Solid. —The Lord Kveldulfr (No Breaks / Let's Pretend)

AMEBIX: *Redux: 12"* EP

Here are three old Amebix songs updated, and believe me, these versions are in some ways better than the old recordings. They're definitely more metal here than they were on the superb *Monolith*, and the recording is more full and dynamic. I had always thought the old stuff sounded a little flat. On this 12" everything sounds alive. I was skeptical at first, but as soon as "Winter" begins—with the high-pitched drone and the guitars feedback and the bass brings it all together—all doubts were immediately dispelled. The sound is even darker than before and there's more of a goth feel. "Chain Reaction" really stands out with the church bells, the cold overdubs, and the vocals are stronger as well. There's more tension, the drumming is more intense and puts more power into these songs. "Arise" has always been a crusher, and the refreshed version is just as vital. Twenty some years later, the music and lyrics are still relevant. On the packaging front, this comes with a large embroidered patch and a download card that has a live version of "Progress." —M.Avrq (Profane Existence, profaneexistence.org)

ANTIBODIES:

Concrete Rockers Go Uptown: 7" EP

These old dudes from the U.K. play Subhumans / Crass-influenced U.K. peace punk. The lyrics are potent, the vocals strong, and the production clear without being overly slick. Those with an aversion to cocky, snotty British-accented cheeseball punk will want to steer clear of it, but their retro sound is pretty damn amusing. Listening to *Concrete Rockers Go Uptown* is kind of like watching a sitcom when you haven't seen one for awhile. It's that cheerful. A full-length from them is supposedly in



the works, but this solid EP is a great start. —Art Ettinger (Choking Hazard, chokinghazardrec.com)

APACHE DROPOUT:

Do the Splendid Crown: 7"

This is the kind of stuff I'm always hoping to stumble across when I have a bunch of music in a box to pick from. Something out of the ordinary, something "off," something that goes "out there." Essentially stuff that makes music exciting. Apache Dropout is some warped bluesy melted mind sort of music. Perceptions are distorted and the music is the focus of your attention. Everything sort of oozes and kind of lumbers in some far-off way. It's lo-fi, loose, trashy, and psychedelic. "Do the Splendid..." is a mid tempo shuffle, while "All I'm Gonna Do Is Laugh" lingers and floats like late summer heat in the mid afternoon. —M.Avrq (Magnetic South, magneticsouthrecordings.com)

ATTENTION SPAN: *Faceless People: CD*

One of my biggest pet peeves is when a band appropriates a name, logo, photo, cover art, slogan or whatever, from another, often older, band and they attempt to pass it off as their own (exceptions exist, of course, such as when it's done in parody, satire, or in an attempt at irony). It happens way too often, nothing

says "zero creativity" and "we don't get it" more, and bands that do this shit are automatically working at a supreme disadvantage they often never transcend because said dearth of creativity usually also manifests in their musical output. In this case, the band has taken Fear's "I Don't Care About You...Fuck You" sticker, placed their logo over the original and slapped it on the booklet and the CD itself. Seriously, all that work put into a bitchin' logo and you couldn't come up with a witty layout and original saying to go with it, or at least cop something that wasn't so goddamned obvious? By all rights, this should be teeter-tottering on the top of a very high shit pile, but I gotta say, they've got themselves quite the band here. Pumping out taut, no-frills Midwestern hardcore with above average lyrics (spelling errors notwithstanding) and enough angry conviction to put them in the running as one of the better bands in this genre, they manage to make it over the line by the skin of their teeth. Kudos to 'em, but here's hoping they put more effort into their visual presentation in the future 'cause they're really doing themselves a disservice otherwise. —Jimmy Alvarado (Homesick)

BABYSHAKER: *Legendary: LP*

Babyslayer started out in late 1998 as a glammy, fun, loud guitar-having, party band. Almost twelve years later with the

original four members still on board, they have evolved into something darker and heavier with a tender but bruised heart that was previously obscured. The glam rock good times of yore are still in place, but now they're accompanied by songs that reveal an undercurrent of desperation and sadness. This recording does a great job of capturing their huge live sound. Listening to it with the volume cranked up, I feel like I'm down front at one of their shows. In other words, it does not have the dreaded "studio" feel to it. Their rhythm section has always been spot on, but the biggest change is Dudley's guitar. It used to be all about power chords rocking out—which it still does do without fail—but now on songs like my favorite one here, "My Karate Is Good Tonight," his guitar wraps around your head until it's like a close friend whispering a secret in your ear. The singer sings so plaintively on the choruses that before I know it, I'm completely sucked in. —Chris Peigler (Self-released)

BASTARD NOISE / ENDLESS BLOCKADE: *The Red List: LP*

The Bastard Noise side of this starts out with intense-as-all-hell jazzy drum and bass hardcore punk with what sounds like an oscillator built on a 555 timer IC with a photocell (noise nerd points!) dropped on top of it. The time changes on the opener constantly catch you off guard and keep it interesting. The vocals here are polished and produced and, honestly, sound better than anything on any of the Man Is The Bastard records. The song "Mutant World of Shame" seems to incorporate the analog noise element better than the first two tracks, but it all works together. The best part is that after listening to the first side, you get to flip this fat slab of wax over and hear the Endless Blockade lay down an absolute epic (fourteen minutes!) hardcore track. The band is obviously influenced by Gism (hence the name), but there is plenty of old, angry power violence in their sound and large doses of noise. Endless Blockade use more than just analog circuitry to make up the noise segments, and there is a lot more layering during their noise parts, which adds more depths to the signal. This is a great pairing for fans of completely blown-out, noisy hardcore. —Ian Wise (Deep Six)

BIG EYES: *Demo: CD-R*

A young New York/New Jersey trio playing dirty power pop, with a hint of Fastbacks worship (and maybe a Fastbacks cover? I can't keep track of this stuff anymore). It's great, I'm looking forward to more, and I'll say this: Even if other bands I like keep breaking up, only to form new bands

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like this, I'll gladly cope. —Joe Evans III (Self-released)

BITTER END, THE:
Fuel for the Machine: CD

I saw the tattoo-style lettering on the cover and thought, "I wonder if this band sounds like Kid Dynamite." Then I heard the fast, melodic hardcore with youth crew riffs and snotty vocals and knew I was right. The Bitter End is faster, though. More "Pause" than "Never Met the Gooch." Look through your record collection. If you have more than three albums with tattoo lettering on the cover, you'll want to look into The Bitter End. —CT Terry (Stik Man, stikmanrecords.com)

BLACK TRIANGLES: Mannequin: 7" EP

Rusty-knived hardcore. Chipped-tooth, chipped-concrete hardcore. Angry Samoans without the dick jokes hardcore. Melodies-in-anguish hardcore. Staring-into-the-void and we-like-Void hardcore. This 7" sounds like it comes with its own jail, abusive security guards, and swinging batons. Watch the bruises go black. —Todd (Stress Domain)

BLACK WINE: Self-titled: LP

Man, I'll totally admit to liking grunge before it got a name, around '89/'90. The basic idea was take Black Sabbath and Black Flag, fuck around with it, and wocka wocka, new takes on what was mostly becoming stale hardcore or "maybe this Sunset Strip butt rock isn't so great to jump onto right now"

bands. (Fugazi and Big Drill Car being quick-to-remember exceptions.) It wasn't punk rock's proudest hour, to be sure. But, through a distillation process, Black Wine are celebrating the good stuff of what would come to be labeled as grunge. I imagine Jeff Schroeck's brain to be like that vodka still in TV's *M.A.S.H.*, taking simple potatoes and making rocket fuel. For the precise, direct heat on the record, I imagine Miranda Taylor's drumming like a Bunsen burner. It's also far from ponderous shoegaze and that's evident in the "Mmmm, delicious stew!" bubbling of J Nixon's bass. Black Wine are somehow able to arrow through the bumperisms of early '90s "we'll wear our hair down and put away our dude makeup" rock, shake out all the dubious shit, and reveal these shiny, glistening gems. It feels like I'm listening to Tad doing a duet with non-"Ouch! Hot stove of oppression!" Babes In Toyland. This is a sneaky record in a musical world rife with landmines. I look forward to future listens. —Todd (Don Giovanni)

BODIES, THE: Angel on the Nine: 7"

Seriously, how long have The Bodies been promising a new 7"? Eight years or so, I think. I never thought the day would come, but here it is in my hands. I'll tell you this: It would be easy to think that these two songs were recorded way back whenever they released something last. They sound exactly like they did a decade ago. The good news is that is the BEST THING EVER! I love The Bodies so much!

The bass-driven songs that bounce around in your skull for weeks at a time and you don't get mad about it. Abe's vocals jumping all over it, rattling with precision. The shout-back choruses... THE BODIES ARE BACK! Now let's have an LP, preferably before I start collecting my old age pension. —Ty Stranglehold (Modern Action)

BOMBON: Las Chicas Del...: LP

It's a bit of a shortcut to say "Surf rock done by three ladies," but it gets us to our destination quicker. It's a shortcut to say "surf" because there's some really nice horn work that lends to a fantastic spaghetti western vibe on a track. It seems like there's something pretty major going right beneath the waves besides tons of reverb, an organ, and an affection for The Ventures and the 5,6,7,8's. Since it's been over a decade since we were last awash in any sort of surf revival tidal wave, I'd throw mid-period Man... Or Astroman? into the mix of comparisons. Bombon aren't afraid to add space, landscape, soundscape, and breadth to their songs. *Las Chicas...* is pleasant as all hell and a good record to put on when you still want to talk and not yell, but still have a great time, set a mood, and hang out with a bunch of folks. Movie soundtracks of the future, watch out. —Todd (45 RPM)

BROOKHAVEN:
When the Chorus Walks: CD

You know that scene in *High Fidelity* where John Cusack catches those

thrasher punks stealing stuff, and its all like, Sigue Sigue Sputnik or whatever? Okay, now pretend it was Yo La Tengo and Tristeza records. Then at the end when the party's bumping and they finally play, it's just horribly boring shoegaze not nearly as good as the aforementioned bands. You find yourself skipping ahead to the part where Cusack (aka Nick Hornby) wraps up his defense of mediocrity as love, but you just can't get there. You watch in bored horror for a minute at a time then skip ahead, but never get to it, not even a single lyric. It's like that, and it took them two years to record it. —Rene Navarro (Expel)

CAPTAIN BLACK NO STARS / RASTA4EYES: Split CD

Captain Black No Stars and Rasta4Eyes are both British bands playing third-wave ska. I am not well versed in the current ska scene (I don't know which wave we are on), but it is well produced with lots of bass and on par with the Moon Ska sound (as well as I'm familiar with it). Each band has horns and the song titles containing words like "dub" and "herb." I looked up the record label and it appears to me that Do The Dog is out to keep the sound alive. Seen? —Billups Allen (Do The Dog)

CAPTAIN, WE'RE SINKING:
It's a Trap: 7"

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beery weariness of old Hot Water Music and Planes Mistaken For Stars with Dillinger 4's ability to pile on complicated parts without losing the catchiness. Sounds like summer to me. I do wish they'd included some lyrics on the incredibly ugly cover, because I want to know what a song called "Crushed by Milwaukee's Best" is all about. —CT Terry (Kind Of Like, kindoflikerecords.com)

CASPIAN: *Tertia*: 2 x LP

It's interesting how music affects your state of mind. It's like drugs or alcohol. If you're willing to give yourself over to music, some interesting things occur. Caspian play instrumental music very similar to God Speed You Black Emperor. It's as quiet as it is loud. At times the songs are driving and soaring with the guitars going full blast, then other things get introspective and pensive. There's an innocence here as well. Though it's not pure. There's a forlorn tone, and yet through it all there's a feeling of hope and closure. I have sat and listened to this record, really listened to this record, for a few nights. These songs take over and haunt my thoughts. Everything on this album is connected. There is no random assortment. You're taken from the beginning of "Mie" all the way through to the final "Sycamore" which ends with only the drums and a sense of things opening up at the end. Listen to this one in the dark. —M.Avrq (The Mylene Sheath, mylensheath.com)

CAT PARTY: *Heartache over Headache*: 7" EP

I understand there's little justice in this world when it comes to music, but if one out of every ten people who own a Joy Division or Bauhaus T-shirt gave Cat Party one listen, I'm absolutely certain the pressing of this record would sell out in a week. Cat Party play icy, bleak, exposed wire post punk on par with the best of prime Factory records... and playing in an almost absolute void. —Todd (myspace.com/birdsofpreymusic)

CHICAGO THRASH ENSEMBLE:

Self-titled: 12" EP

The name of the band says it all. Consisting of members from various Chicago-area bands (Authority Abuse, Hewhocorrupts, etc.) make up this group, er... uh, ensemble and crank out thrash metal that's not ironic or nostalgic. Instead, this stuff is a wall of sound with pummeling drums and crunching guitars topped off with strangled vocals. All fast and no slow, so don't expect "Doom Noise" to slow down into Sabbath territory. Who is Dennis Thorneater? —M.Avrq (Plastic Airlines, plasticairlines.com)

CLASS OF 1984: Self-titled: CD

Sometimes you have to go backwards to move forwards. This is surely the case for Victoria B.C.'s Class Of 1984. Playing fast paced skate punk is one thing, but adding the old school flavor really puts the icing on the cake. Being from my town, I know that these guys have been skating and punk rocking in

one band or another since about 1984 and their experience shows. Great songs with very Kevin Seconds-esque vocals. I could see myself listening to this when I'm at the skatepark not skating. —Ty Stranglehold (Bullitt)

CLOROX GIRLS:

Demos, Rarities & Early 7"s: Cassette

I had to take some large steps back when these guys first came out. I remember buying their first LP amid all the hype that was heaped upon them by some starved folks supposedly in the know. It was okay, but nothing earth shattering. The hype put them at a dangerously high level they had no way of actually living up to. Some years later, I get this for review and after the dust has settled, I can fully appreciate the Clorox Girls, and sort of understand the initial hype. I can't tell you which early 7"s are on here, or what's rare, but I can tell you this stuff is pretty damn good. Punk rock with a great rough recording that gives the songs some serious bite. They can be tough and dirty with songs like "Hitman" then suddenly blow you away with some power pop, like "Eva Braun", and "In My Mouth." The songs on the second side have a bit more refined quality about them, but still retain the teeth of the early material featured on side one. I'll hang on to this tape forever, perhaps. I kind of wish I would have kept that first album... —M.Avrq (Burger, burgerrecords.com)

CONGA FURY / SHITSTORM: Split: EP

I had the extreme pleasure of seeing

Japan's Conga Fury play at a place called El Taco Nazo in Pomona, California. I was definitely much more interested in many of the other bands playing that night and was curious to see Conga Fury. But I had no idea about the treat I was in store for. The four songs on their side of this split are reminiscent of their live set experience: loud, distorted fastcore with awesome, distinct vocals. It's been a few years since I've heard anything about CF so I'm definitely glad they're still around and screaming. Shitstorm have definitely picked up on the lessons contained in their Assuck and early Napalm Death records. And that's a good thing because it seems as if there aren't too many grindcore bands these days that can follow the simple formula of short, fast, and chaotic. Throw in a picture of some third world kids smoking weed with rocket grenades on their shoulders and you've got yourself a winner. —Juan Espinosa (To Live A Lie)

CZOSNEK: *Sometimes*: CD

Back when I was a wee lad reading *Thrasher Magazine* and just getting into punk rock, I was like a sponge trying to absorb everything I could about it. There were always lots of bands featured in the magazine I was dying to hear. There was one ad that used to run in every issue for a compilation called *World Wide Punk* and the artwork was an angry punk rocker with a globe for a head sporting a big mohawk. It claimed to have bands from thirty-three different countries. I never managed to

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get my hands on the comp., but I've got to say, it was the first thing I thought of when I listened to Czosnek. This Polish (I think) band is exactly what I expected the bands on that compilation to sound like. Angry and desperate. I am a firm believer that hardcore is that much angrier when screamed in a foreign language. I love that I can't even begin to pronounce the song titles but they thoughtfully translate the liner notes into English for me. Yep, they're angry punk rockers, all right. They've probably got more to be angry about than I could ever imagine. I, for one, am glad that they decided to put it to music. Of the two vocalists, I prefer the female to the male. He's too growly for me and she is perfect. I love this disc. Now to search out *World Wide Punk* to see how it compares. —Ty Stranglehold (Nikt Nie Nie Wie)

D.I.S.: *Critical Failure*: CD

Formerly known as Destroyed In Seconds in their infancy, this band changed their name prior to their debut with the shortened initialed version of their name. Appropriate, since the musical stylings are influenced by Swedish d-beat with a heavy overtone of metal. A band also has a heavy-hitting roster of former and current members of Phobia, Eat The Living, Mange, Exhumed, Intronaut, and Semtex Vest. Sonically, the music is pure anger that is loud and thick. Seeing the band live on many occasions, they blow you away since they bring along plenty of amplification. On this debut, they

were able to replicate that loudness and power that they have in their live shows. Production is top notch without sounding sterile. Levels seem to be all in the right place so that not one person is being drowned out. If bands like Skitsystem or Wolfpack/Wolfbrigade tickle your fancy, this band should satisfy your taste buds. —Donofthedeat (Deep Six)

D.O.A.: *Talk-Action=0*: CD

The fact the album title is a retread notwithstanding (previously used, albeit in a slightly different form, for a live album they released some years ago), I am pleased as punch to say that this, *this*, my friends, is a release worthy of the DOA name. Sure, Dimwit, Biscuits and the "classic" lineup(s) are missed, but Joey 'n' his latest batch of cohorts dish up some tunes that *sound* like DOA: zippy, catchy yet abrasive, topical but not preachy, rough yet tempered with their signature snotty charm. The second half might not be quite as consistently strong as the first, and there are a couple of spots where their later "rock" sound sneaks in, but you'll be hard pressed to find an original here that flat-out sucks. Nice to see, and hear 'em, back in fine form and without all the bad ska in tow. —Jimmy Alvarado (Sudden Death, suddendead.com)

DEAD MECHANICAL: *Addict Rhythms*: CD

Second record from this Baltimore trio. So many things spring to mind while listening to this recording. Since

the band has two primary singer/songwriters, I tend to think of bands that reached for the brass ring and got it like Hüsker Dü and Mission Of Burma. Not because Dead Mechanical sounds like those bands. Just that the inner dynamic of having two writers/singers in the band just takes it into the upper stratosphere of excellence. Plus, bassist Dan Bress co-writes on a few tracks, proving he is a step above Greg Norton. But seriously, on some tracks here the vocal interplay recalls Fugazi at their fiercest, but without being overly preachy at any point in time. Guitarist Lucas Carscadden's brittle vocals and guitar lines mesh so well with drummer Matt Dorsey's drum patterns and subtle vocals that you may not even notice it until it's too late. Then you will never get *Addict Rhythms* out of your head. This is an excellent situation to be in when all is said and done. —Sean Koepenick (Traffic Street)

DEFEKTORS: *The Bottom of the City*: LP

Wow! I have the two singles, and they're pretty good, but this album totally surpasses any expectations I had towards these guys. The music has become more urgent and direct, shedding some of the instrumental touches but gaining more power. There's definitely an early Wipers influence in the music, with the jittery rhythms and skirting the territory between punk and post punk. The influence is really apparent on the "Burning Light," which goes off into

"Youth Of America" territory with its duration and surf guitar sound. Songs tend to stay in the mid-tempo range, but can get really lit up, as on "Kickfirstone," which starts off much in the same way as the others, then it's fast and in your face. Head on over to the last record store in town and get it. —M.Avr (Nominal / Grotesque Modern, recordsnominal.com)

DEFIANCE, OHIO:

Midwestern Minutes: CD

Defiance, Ohio seem smart enough to know that they're dancing on sharpened swords. They see that the edges are honed and so shiny they're reflective. These swords can be melted down into plows that will irrigate future fields of highly productive records that'll bloom bountiful and beautiful. They also can see that these swords can be turned into guillotines. Or can remain swords and people get stabbed and gutted and beheaded by swords. Oh, folk punk, what a mistress, what a double-edged sword. Defiance, Ohio are dancing on the sharpened swords of folk punk and they're one of the best bunch of dancers on the planet right now. Do they supersede a made-up label—that they didn't ask for—slapped to their side like international luggage going through customs? What do I know? I know that *Midwestern Minutes* is a well realized record that's super duper pleasant, played with traditional instruments and high levels of conscientiousness and preciousness. —Todd (No Idea)

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DESPITE ALL THIS:

It's All Worth Fighting for: CD

More of the Woosley Farm/Sharpie Fumes Collective kids get together—Starla and Brad Religion and all the rest. Names I've read probably a dozen times from half a dozen different bands I've reviewed over the years—or at least it feels that way. It's more scrappy, sing-a-long punk shot through with hope and tenacity and a stubborn unwillingness to give in. Like *The Wild* if they sloughed off the banjo and Americana leanings, or *Shotwell* if they had male and female vocals. Or maybe *The New Dress* if they veered a bit away from the solemnity. Good work, and heartfelt. —Keith Rosson (*Despite All This*)

DEZERTER:

Underground out of Poland: LP

I don't think I have listened to this since the late '80s when this was originally released by Maximum Rock and Roll. It was part of my brother's collection and I think I had moved out by that point, so I didn't get frequent listens. It's so long out of print, I don't think I actually have seen a copy pop up too often in the used bins through the years. Like most good things, someone saw the importance and reissued this. It's good to hear this again. It definitely has the sound of many eastern bloc countries of the time who interpreted punk from smuggled cassette tapes that they got from tourists and through the mail. You can tell that a lot of what was

influencing them was the punk out of the U.K.: simple and straight forward mid-tempo punk. But what captivates me from that time period was that they even pulled off recording. You can hear the crude recording production but also you can hear the magic that was captured. It is what it is and more important that it is being documented. It's not like today where it's so easy to record on a computer and get great recordings. Glad that history is not forgotten and made available for both newcomers and people who missed out to be given the chance to hear this. —Donofthedeath (Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

DOGENDS: *Pure Hate: 7"*

Do you remember a time when thrash didn't equal metal? I do, and I can guarantee that Dogends do, too. This E.P. dishes out the flipped hat skate thrash like it was 1985. I'd go out and bust a boneless one on the curb if my back didn't spasm at the thought of it! Oh well, I'll keep listening to this and dream about when I could still skate. Good job, boys! —Ty Stranglehold (*Flat Black*)

DOPAMINES, THE: *Expect the Worst: CD*

These dudes are like the Gallo wine of punk rock. With the passing of time, they just get better and better. Orson Welles would be stoked. Great songs, cool song titles, and hummable melodies stock this record up to the brim. "Public Domain" sports a great chorus while I'm hoping "Dick

Simmons" is about a certain asshole bass player. But maybe not. There are two songs about dates, so you know these guys are pretty deep. And "3244" is the best number song since "2541." So go out and buy this when you see them on tour, which I will be doing next week. —Sean Koepenick (*Paper & Plackick*)

DRI: *Dealing with It: LP*

A vinyl reissue of DRI's second long player (or their first LP, if you consider its predecessor merely a twelve-inch repress of their *Dirty Rotten EP 7"*, no matter what its covered said), wherein Kurt and his Imbeciles cleaned up the recording process and tightened up the playing all the more, yet didn't let up on the throttle one whit. Here they took the speed and brevity that got them all the attention in the first place and honed it into something wholly original—there was no shortage of lesser bands cranking shit out just as fast, but there was no mistaking a DRI tune when they came on in a given rotation. Some think of this as that "bridge" record between DRI the punk band and DRI the metal band, and there are no doubt legions of fans who will vehemently disagree with me, but I prefer to think of it as the last truly great thing they've released to date, 'cause that slide into "crossover" metal was just plain bad and I've yet to hear anything from them since that comes close. —Jimmy Alvarado (*Beer City*)

DRI: *Dirty Rotten: LP*

Dirty laundry time. When I was in high school, a couple years after I'd discovered punk, the DRI logo was one of the easier logos to draw: the pedestrian dude running, inside of a circle. I got a jean jacket from Goodwill. I bleached the back panel, then painted the logo. Not satisfied with its punkness, I also found a tan leather dress jacket. I cut the sleeves off the denim jacket and tried my best to sew on the tan arms of the leather jacket. I couldn't ever get it right. Every time I raised my arms, I'd rip the seams. So, after a lot of not getting it right, I tore the sleeves off and wore the sleeveless denim jacket. It was about a year before the bleach ate through the entire back of the jacket and it totally disintegrated. I got my fair share of crap for that ratty jacket. Why the fuck am I telling you this? It's good to know that DRI's *Dirty Rotten* twenty-two-song EP (originally on 7") fared much better than my stupid jacket from twenty years ago. When I first heard DRI, I could understand only a couple of their lyrics. I knew I was getting blasted in the face and that they hated Reaganomics and nuclear war. That was good enough for me. We parted ways with *Crossover*, but I've got no ill will. They helped me through a difficult transition and were a great soundtrack to punching holes in walls of my adolescence. Thanks, Beer City for making a great-to-look-at, true-spirit-of-the-original reissue. —Todd (*Beer City*)



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EGGHEAD: Would Like a Few Words with You: CD

Formerly named Fuck It, We'll Make Our Own Helicopter (the one from Saskatoon, not Philly. The Philly one won the lawsuit, then became I Can Make A Whole Row Of Thirteen Year Old Girls Cry Until Their Shirts Are See-Through), Egghead is three loveable dopes. Okay, not dopes. That's not fair. Dorks. Geeks. *Nerds*. The ones that get shit done. The ones that are now being productive members of society after college, just like *Revenge of the Nerds* promised. And although I'm going to say pop punk™, then take it back, and put it back in like the hokey pokey, it's all true. 1.) Egghead are pop punk in the fact that they play punk rock that's poppy. (Like catchy Flag Of Democracy.) The two main vocalists, John and Johnny, have prototypical pop punk voices. Sorta whiney. Sorta snotty. Sorta strained. "Good/not-really-good" voices, like Ramones not-really-good, not Genesis/Styx/Tarkus "good." Their voices, up in the mix, may be a hurdle for some. 2.) Egghead aren't pop punk™, in the sense of the diminishing returns pop punk™'s been seeing the last ten years, where instead of bands only capable of replicating a single Ramones song for their entire catalog, far too many pop punk™ bands are now doing that to either Screeching Weasel or the Queers. Egghead's focus is too far broad for such tracing paper chicanery. I scoured this thing. No

bubblegum references. Sure, there are songs about girls, but the predominant one has the refrain "My daughter can fuck up your daughter." 3.) Egghead, really, are pop punk in the rich history of Stiff Little Fingers, The Dickies, and a suburban-parenting version of Sloppy Seconds. They mix in speed and style shifts of a band that couldn't care less about the fragile, ephemeral, ever-smaller boxes pop punk™ seems more than happy to squeeze into these-a-days. It'd also be safe to say that fans of The Dead Milkmen and the bright spots in Camper Van Beethoven's catalog will find a lot to like in Egghead. I'm definitely a fan. -Todd (Knock Knock)

EL BANDA: Skutki Uboczne: 2 x LP

One impulse in DIY punk rock circles is to go for the obscure because there is safety there. It's safe because the odds are heavily against a larger audience, and with that, the lessened possibility of widespread exploitation. The obscure can be a highly regarded secret. You know the story. Thousand-dollar 7"s. Publications that laude intimate knowledge of those obscure bands, their knowledge measured by the cache of exclusion. (i.e. "I have this. You don't. I'm better.") And don't get me wrong, I love a lot of stuff that happens to be obscure, not because it's obscure, but because I think it's freakin' great and underappreciated. El Banda is a current Polish punk band. They're melodic. They're hardcore. They're much more than that;

adventurous as shit. They have been one of my favorite bands during the last couple of years. Since they sing in Polish, the chances of them becoming popular in America is minimal (which is a shame). With *Side Effects* (all the lyrics are translated in a gorgeous gatefold with full-sized inserts in both Polish and English), El Banda have put out a dark, epic, "you're in their world now" concept album. The four album sides are broken into suites. Its pace is more varied than their previous LP, *Przejdzie Ci el Banda*. It's more like a hand-held drill that slowly twists into the cranium, splitting skin, cracking skull, worm-driving deeper and deeper. Bleak. Weathered. Wintry. Murderous. It's like you, as the listener, are slowly dissolving into the acid of the record. I'm going to enjoy soaking in its notes for years to come. (Fucked Up's *Hidden World* comes to mind when I listen to this.) So, I'm willing to stake a lot on this record and this band because they reaffirm that punk's as strong, as adventurous, as crucial, as meaningful as ever. And I'd bet you a dozen donuts that their own locals don't know how good this band is. Yet. I rarely give advice, but don't sleep on El Banda. It'll get expensive if you do, and I'm not talking about the money. -Todd (Pasazer)

EXECUTIONER: Hellbound: EP

I'm honestly baffled why this did not officially come out in 1982, when it was recorded. This is fuggin' awesome hardcore from San Jose. If

you like bands like Social Unrest, Sick Pleasure, and Code Of Honor, then you must pick this up. Hell, if you like Fallout Boy I strongly suggest you pick this up so you can hear what good music is. Executioner had the classic hardcore sound wired. The songs are a mix of mid to fast tempos, with a great guitar sound that is distorted but not overdone, with a bass that has a lurking and crawling sound. The vocals are delivered through gritted teeth, and everything comes across loud and clear. "Riding in the Flatlands" is a great song that moves at a mid tempo, telling the tale of life after the bomb drops. The perfect song for driving through the streets late at night. The whole record is perfect, actually. One of those records I can put on in twenty years and get the same rush like I did the first time I listened to it. -M.Avrq (Patac, patacrecords.com)

EYES: TAQN:10" EP

Yes, you read that correctly, we're talking about THAT Eyes, the '70s L.A. punk band spearheaded by Joe Ramirez and at various times featured DJ Bonebrake (X), Charlotte Caffey (Go-Go's), David Brown (Screamers, Dangerhouse Records co-founder), Joe Nanini (Wall Of Voodoo, The Bags, Black Randy & the Metrosquad), and Jimmy Leach amongst its ranks. Outside of tracks on a few comps and a single on Dangerhouse, I don't think they much released anything else. That said, I dunno what pact with the devil Greg Artix has made, but here

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he's not only re-released the original 1979 Dangerhouse masterpiece single ("TAQN" and "Topological Lines") and comp tracks ("Eniwetok" and "Disneyland"), but he's also managed to wrangle two heretofore unreleased tunes, "Research Bee" and "Go Go Bee," from the same session out of the Dangerhouse vaults, giving us a total of six tracks of tasty, poppy punk from one of the finest of L.A.'s first-wave bands on glorious vinyl. Just to stress how fuggin' awesome this release is, I predict that all copies bought will be worn to the nubs within a week's time and those purchasers will forever be cursed to find themselves singing "Disneyland makes me communist/ Makes me plant the bombs in the trash can lids....Blow up Disneyland/Blow up AnaHEIIIIIMMMM!!!" every single time they visit that magical kingdom of talking mice and wallet raping food prices. Put more succinctly, this is worth every penny you shell out for it, and then some. -Jimmy Alvarado (Artifix)

FAST FOOD: *Party of Three*: CD

An album by a Spanish pop punk trio released by a Japanese label. What a global age we live in. The cover art successfully evokes a spirit of fun, graphically relying on hot rods, UFOs, witches, surfing, '60s girl groups, food, and zombies. Basically all the coolest shit. Musically, Fast Food maintains its excellence with sixteen tracks of above-the-bar, sweet, melodic punk. What sets them apart from most of the sweet, melodic punk you already listen

to is that all the lyrics are in Spanish, somehow cranking up the fun factor of the music by at least 130 percent. The only words I could discern in the English language were "Spiderman" and the phrase "gabba gabba hey," which was invoked in three different songs on *Party of Three*. The entire album is basically a loving Spanish re-envisioning of the Ramones and Screeching Weasel and Fast Food are not shy about acknowledging their obvious influences. Besides all the "gabba gabba heys," they also do a note-for-note cover of Screeching Weasel in Spanish by the moniker of "Fantasia de Supermercado." Upon further research, I found out that Fast Food had been around since the mid-'90s and the new record is the best tunes off their previous two records recorded with a suitable recording budget. In any case, mucho gusto Fast Food, you have made my summer a bit more bouncy and enjoyable. -Jake Shut (SP, sp-records.com)

GAS CHAMBER: *Self-titled*: LP

Dark, distorted hardcore with powerviolence tendencies from Buffalo, NY. It's no surprise that members' previous bands have had records released by 625 five or ten years ago. And while I do enjoy getting the shit kicked outta me by the music, I'm really digging this black dust sleeve. I'm sure these guys are pretty well-known in their immediate vicinity, but if you're looking for some raw hardcore from people who have been doing it for years, Gas Chamber awaits. -Daryl (Warm Bath)

GATORFACE: *Wasted Monuments*: CD

I am a huge fan of the New Mexican Disaster Squad family of bands, and Gatorface is no exception. Actually, y'know what? I'll say I wasn't *completely* wild about the EP. I thought it was good, but I didn't love it like I loved the Virgins LP or the No Friends stuff. But goddangit, this full-length is a slayer. It's certainly still in the post-Adolescents world that these dudes seem to *kinda* like, but I'm not complaining. It's no coincidence that my undying love for Adolescents/Flower Leperds/Abandoned/ADZ/etc. has a direct correlation with my love for everything these central Floridian gentlemen churn out. That said, it's not derivative even for a second. I can't really think of anything outside of these fellas' other bands to compare Gatorface's writing to, and I think it has something to do with the kinda start-stop, off-time writing/riffing style. If you pay attention, there's something very unique about the structure of a lot of the main riffs in these songs, and I find it creates a totally different mood than a more straightforward hardcore approach would. It's cleverer, more thought out, and that makes it a lot more interesting and ups the replay value significantly. Anyway, it's just fucking fantastic. -Dave Williams (No Idea)

GOOD RIDDANCE:

Capricorn One (Singles & Rarities): CD

I thought the band was done with their farewell release *Remain in Memory*. I guess the popularity of the band

justifies one more last hurrah for those who need just something more. This release compiles tracks from their early singles and splits, unreleased demos, an outtake, and comp tracks. I seem to have everything that was released minus the split with Ensign. I did not know they had released that. Put that on the want list. The outtake and demo tracks are what intrigued me here. Hearing something new from a band that was thought to be defunct is a treat. They were one of my favorite bands during the '90s which I still listen to often. A great collection filler. -Donofthedeath (Fat)

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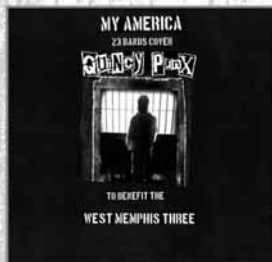
Fight Dirty: CD

To call this a split would be misleading. It's more of a collaboration, I would say. Folk punk collective Mischief Brew's only constant member is band leader Erik Petersen, and in this case he joins up with Guignol, who I guess could best be described as a muso-world-punk ensemble. I was excited to hear this album since Guignol contains a couple of key past and present members of the World/Inferno Friendship Society: Peter Hess and Franz Nicolay. Also, the Mischief Brew split with Joe Jack Talcum is pretty great. This album could probably be called a klezmer-folk-gypsy-jazz-punk extravaganza without too much of a stretch (it has a completely reworked Iron Maiden cover to boot, so I guess I could throw metal into the mix, too). I know I am making this album sound like a sloppy mess, but it's really

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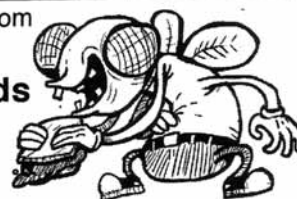
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the exact opposite. The musicianship is tight and it's a fun listen. Only about five of the sixteen songs feature vocals (mostly by Erik Petersen, which I guess makes them slightly more on the Mischief Brew side), but the instrumentals are really great, too. They sound exciting and intriguing, like what I always hope world-fusion music will sound like, not the watered down soundtrack for a Volvo drive that most of it ends up being. A few of my favorites are the creepy, lurching, circus instrumental "The Tardy Barker," vagabond-ish life lesson "Fight Dirty," and the unrecognizable but awesome instrumental Iron Maiden cover "Hallowed Be Thy Name." This is definitely one of my favorites from the last couple months. —Adrian (Fistolo)

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On the dirt roads that crisscross the fires of hell, rusty pickup trucks drag trailers full of the hay that's used to keep the flames burning high. Once in a while, when Satan is feeling uncharacteristically sadistic, he hires a band to ride on the bales of hay playing music to make the damned smile, to taunt them with a moment of horrific joy before they are forced to go back to their eternal torture. That band is Harley Poe, and they do their job graciously, grinning sardonically in the heat as they pound on their keyboards, bash their acoustic guitars, and watch demons dance circles around them. —MP Johnson (Chain Smoking)

HEWHOCANNOTBENAMED:

***Sunday School Massacre:* CD**

As can be expected from the Dwarves' guitarist, this sounds like more recent Dwarves fare, just as demented (cf. "Duct Tape Love") with maybe more rock/glam influences than usual. It ain't even close to *Blood, Guts, and Pussy*, but if you're a fan of the (at least musically) kinder, gentler Dwarves of the past decade or so, this'll get you going nicely. —Jimmy Alvarado (MVD Audio)

HOLY MESS, THE: *Benefit Sheesh:* 7"

"It sounds like Latterman!" I declared, entering the room with the gusto of a more confident man. My friends, visiting from out of town, agreed, but also disagreed as the comparison was apt, but not necessarily the most accurate. "Damn, Razorcake must like you if they send you stuff this good. It sounds like something I would have listened to in the '90s," Matt decided. "Bryan, you should put that in your review. Everyone needs that sentence as a frame of reference." And so I did. —Bryan Static (Evil Weevil/Weird Skull, weirdskull.com)

HOT NEW MEXICANS: *Self-titled:* LP

I'll fully admit that I live in a music bunker. I'm not being a dick when I say I have no opinion about, say, today, Lady Gaga. It's just that I don't care, like I don't care about fast food chains or I don't care about Fox News. That shit's ninety-nine percent designed to accelerate your death through constant

radiation. Paradoxically, by being everywhere, these systems are designed to keep everyone isolated and alone. I hate the systems of control so much that I don't even know the current players. So, pardon me if I'm all pissy about the music company that's attached to a multinational that's currently trying to privatize the rain that's falling down on Bolivia and don't know a current hit or artist. But by not being "plugged in" to a 24/7 influx of distractions, I can sit in my room—most often by myself—and listen to records and read books. If I like the records—this one's fuckin' great—chances are I'll go see them if they come through town. Chances are I'll be, "Oh, fuck, I know that dude. He was the bassist in the Carrie Nations." Chances are, if we talk, I'll learn a bit about Cleveland, Mississippi, write down where the best BBQ is in the area. The Hot New Mexicans play ragged, melodic, approachable DIY punk that reminds me of scuffed floors, long drives, cracked-open beers, proportionately incorrect tattoos of bands from the '90s, cracking-open-the-sky sunsets, secrets and stains rolled up in frayed carpets, hairy dogpiles, body odor, and the really beautiful parts to *Tortilla Flats*. Like when the house burns down and no one gets too mad because it's just a house and not the people inside of it. —Todd (Houseplant, houseplantrecords.com / Recess, recessrecords.com)

HOTDOG / HAIRDOS ON FIRE: *Split:* 7"

I can't shake that I'm listening to the equivalent of Lomax field recordings,

yet instead of recordings of musicians directly on the Mississippi delta in the early '30s, the tape recorders were set up in living rooms in Tempe and Las Cruces, 2010. To me, the effects are the same: sound technology capturing folks playing; celebration and preservation of local color; struggle against the homogenization of a dominant media culture through creative activity. This split is lo-fi, melodic DIY punk made by circumstance, not predominant aesthetics (and more Bananas than Leadbelly). Both sides are fun, honest, and memorable. Let's hear it for fuck-ups, the fucked-over, and democracy. —Todd (Dirt Cult / Margin Mouth)

HOUNDS AND HARLOTS:

***Are You With Us?:* CD**

Really good, straight-forward street punk in the vein of Reducers SF and Forced Reality with great choruses. These guys can really play their stuff. The timing is right on, the lyrics are good, and you find yourself not wanting to get too far from the stereo. Very solid three songs. I'm with you. —Rene Navarro (hounds and harlots.com)

IDI AMIN AND THE AMPUTEES:

***Self-titled:* 7"**

Dunno when this was originally recorded, and there's precious little on the record itself, but it could easily pass itself off as some long lost punk gem with song titles like "Disco Bitch" and "Nasty Nazi," not to mention the full on skronky punk attack of the music itself. —Jimmy Alvarado (Going Underground)

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IRRITONES: *Negative Dots*: LP

"Don't talk, don't talk to me about Jesus Christ!" With lyrics like that you know this is a record to get! Punk rock that doesn't aim to be warm and cute. This is catchier than the bird flu, with a style heavily borrowing from the late '70s, and features the singer from the Hate Pinks who brought the world "Kissing Cops With My Ass." Irritones pretty much pick up where that band left off. Mainly mid tempo with some slow-burning tension and guitars that have a sort of gritty distortion. Songs like "Japanese Cars," "Danse en France," "Cannibal Kids," and "Rejection Is All We Got" are just four of the many reasons you should get this white platter. The best band out of France since Magma. —M.Avg (P.Trash, ptrashrecords.com)

JACKIE SHARK AND THE BEACH BUTCHERS: *2nd Generation Rising: 7"*

According to the blurb on the back, Jackie Shark founded Riverside, California's first punk band, Rabies, in 1977 and said band managed to play the Masque. Wanting a document of the band's original tunes after it had broken up, Jackie enlisted the assistance of one Jeffery Blast and the result was the original pressing of this single, released in 1978 with a pressing of 250 copies. Naturally, collector geeks froth at the mouth for copies of the original pressing, but Artifix in its infinite wisdom has seen fit to repress it for those of us who are more concerned with hearing the music than paying the

equivalent of a college tuition for one fucking 45. Is it worth the trouble, you ask? Well, if you're big on punk history, Southern California punk history, Riverside punk history, or simply dig primitive rock'n'roll served up with heaping helpings of attitude, then yes, it's definitely worth the trouble. —Jimmy Alvarado (Artifix)

JUNIUS: *The Martyrdom of a Catastrophist: 2 x LP*

Gloom pop re-imagined as arena rock, with tons of reverb and massive echoing bluster. The songs spread across the four sides are long, with shades of what occasionally sounds like Tears For Fears and other similarly gloomy '80s new wave groups blown up to epic proportions. Surprisingly, it works quite well. A lot of care has been put into this release, from the recording quality and delivery to the packaging, which includes a nice big booklet with lyrics and artwork highlighting each song, as well as two vinyl slabs the color of honey throat lozenges. Was a bit wary of this, but glad I took a chance on it. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Mylene Sheath)

JUNK, THE: *Glad to See You're Back: 7" EP*

Blunt, catchy, snotty, itchy Orange County punk rock. The legacy's all there from The Crowd to Shattered Faith to The Stitches and this 7" would have fit right in on Hostage Records and in the New Beach Alliance without a blink five, ten years ago. These three songs

are also an understandable continuation of The Smut Peddlers—Gish and Julia are the bulletproof rhythm section. With another vocalist, the lyrics remain dark, but, this time out, are looking for redemption instead of reveling in being king of the fuck-ups. Solid stuff. It's like a motorcycle with all the attention paid to the motor, not the paint. I'm looking forward to them opening up the throttle on the open road of a full length. Limited to 150. —Todd (Bad Idea Music, badideamusic.com)

KALASHNIKOV: *Living in a Psycho-Chaos Era*: LP

Ever since my discovery of this incredible collective from Italy, I have tried to spread the word of them like gospel. So much so, I put money into their *Angoscia Rock 7"*, their previous release. I had every intention to put money into the CD version of their current release but the money I had intended to use was sucked dry by bills. Shitty U.S. economy! They do releases funded by worldwide participation. Chaos Rurale out of Canada who participated on a few of their releases went a step further. On top of being part of the new CD, he went ahead and did a vinyl version. Four hundred on black and one hundred on clear with a beautiful two-sided color fold out poster sleeve. The music is adventurous and I stand by my claims that they have elements of punk, post-punk, new wave, and the music of the early productions of Cirque du Soleil. The growth of this

band musically and production-wise has been by multitudes. This release storms out from the get-go on the first track: a charging yet not aggressive song that has the energy of a protest march. Other tracks give me a post apocalyptic picture but with hope and survival. On others, you get the feeling that you can still have fun while being angry. The end track is a cover of The Mob's *No Doves Fly Here*. It's haunting and emotional and paints the picture perfect of post-war. Every person who has an ear for music that I have played this band to or given them a copy of the music has become converts. So, hopefully, you are reading this and my words will make you seek out this great band. The CD version contains tracks from the latter 7", all packaged in a double gatefold booklet. —Donofthedeat (Chaos Rurale, chaosrurale.com)

KERMIT'S FINGER: *Grudge*: LP

Wow, loooooong has it been since I last heard anything from these guys, and judging from this release they haven't "matured" much in sound, which is just fine. Sixteen tracks of rudimentary punk tackling some of the most pressing topical topics: would-be punks who just don't have a clue, proper undergarment fashion choices, and the tragedy that befalls a man spreading salt on snow, to name but a few. If you're looking for the fastest, angriest, catchiest, technically proficient and politically charged punk stuff around, yer gonna be sorely disappointed with

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this, but if you prefer occasionally sloppy punk from a buncha guys who are a lot smarter and funnier than they put on, this'll go down nicely. —Jimmy Alvarado (Poorest Quality)

KICKING SPIT / STYMIE: Split: 7"

Let's begin with saying that melodic Midwest punk with heart and punch is becoming a sound that's far larger than its original geography. It's also a destination with a legacy that includes the Replacements, Hüsker Dü, Mary Tyler Fuckin' Moore, Dillinger Four, and Selby Tigers. Put that in a blender and down with a raw egg. Kicking Spit: From "St. Paul" New Jersey. In that microsecond prior to "grunge" getting a name, like the first Mudhoney single, shit was super tight and Kicking Spit expand it like taffy with a Dinosaur Jr. finger. Stymie: From "Minneapolis," New Jersey. Who'll give Dear Landlord a run for the money by out-"Dear Landlording" them. It's music about honesty, rust, "trailer parks of the mind," and weathering storms. Both sides build on one another. Progress through fucking up on a daily basis. —Todd (Cowabunga)

LACKEY DIE: Self-titled: 7" EP

According to the liner notes, Lackey Die was Charlottesville, Virginia's first hardcore band, forming circa 1982 and managing to survive until 1986. Collected here are two demos, the first recorded in Richmond in 1984 and the second recorded in 1986 at Don Zientara's legendary Inner Ear Studios.

The music's fast, tight, and very much of its time. The recordings are quite good considering the most recent one is twenty-four years old. Nice bit of history here. —Jimmy Alvarado (Feel It)

LENGUAS LARGAS:

Lonely Summertime: 7"

It won't be the first time where I'm belly up to the all-you-can-eat buffet of eating my own words. *Lenguas Largas* occupy the kinder sonic climes of what's become "indie rock." It's a form of music I've come to associate—through more than ample exposure—with designer tags, secret shows, douchebags, future expensive baby strollers, current attempts at irony, and is shooting for the *Juno* soundtrack (of the mind). *Lenguas Largas* is a bunch of dirty DIY dudes playing stony, pleasant, intricate music that builds tension then releases. It's subtle, yet pleasant; thick, swirling, and as fingering as white smoke exhaled deeply from a pipe. The vocals are reminiscent of the Smashing Pumpkins without the ick. Mellow than the first 7", but I like it. —Todd (Dirt Cult)

LYCKA TILL: Self-titled: CD

Really jolly-sounding scrappy punk from Sweden, with some quite prominent trumpet. There's an acoustic guitar along with the electric, so I would say this comes off more folky than ska-like. I know part of it is the voices, but this actually reminds me of some of the early Millencolin. Since a lot of the songs are in Swedish, I didn't

notice how dark or political a lot of the songs were until I looked up the lyrics with translations on the Plan-It-X site. A lot of the songs sound so happy and poppy that I kind of assumed they were about hanging in the woods with some reindeer, gathering lingonberries, sledding, and whatever other chilled-out activities people do in Sweden. All in all, it's a pretty fun record that is worth picking up. Also, I dunno if it's just me, but I swear like four of the songs use the melody from "Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard." Anybody else getting that? —Adrian (Plan-It-X)

MAKEOUTS: *In a Strange Land: LP*

The enclosed press bio states that this band started out as mere Rip Off clones—which I think I might vaguely recollect—but have now honed their craft into some kind of marginally more highbrow garage/pop/punk blend, influenced by Nuggets and Back From The Grave and King Khan and so on and so forth. And, while I guess I can see that—kinda—I'm still feeling a bit of a credibility gap between "showing their new sophisticated influences" and "doing something really noteworthy with their new sophisticated influences." I mean, yeah, there is a Nuggets-like tambourine-boinker or two on here, and there is a definite nod to a sort of BBQ/King Khan-esque candy-ass doo-wop thing going on in places, but their best songs are still the Rip Off Records clones, circa 2000 ((or at least their songs where they sound like the

Kidnappers, minus the cool logo)). I do enjoy the European garage-pop FULL BLAST MONOTONE singing voice, though. It fills me with great respect for their currency. Their next album may or may not be great. Bet the farm on it! BEST SONG: "Never Let You Go" BEST SONG TITLE: "Sound of Crime" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Chicks dig the fully-printed inner sleeves. Well, *i* do, anyway. —Rev. Nørð (Bachelor)

MAKER: *I-91: 7"*

Maker's poppy hardcore is fast, tight, dynamic, and catchy with emotional lyrics. I was drumming along on my thighs, thinking, "This is like the good parts of hardcore, pop punk, and emo," then I looked at their MySpace to get answers and saw, in big letters under their band name, "Pop Punk, Hardcore, Emo." I was right! This record is the little brother of Lifetime's *Jersey's Best Dancers*. It makes me want to drive out the Mass Pike to a VFW hall and see some bands. —CT Terry (Animal Style, animalstylerecords.com)

MALL'D TO DEATH:

Can't Make a Living: CD

This is one of those instances where I hope that reviews actually do help sell records, because *Can't Make a Living* is great and it'd be a total shame if it slipped under the radar. Take the playfulness of The Invalids and the simple melodies of early Off With Their Heads and you're on the right track. Ten songs of way-simple punk



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stuff with just a smidge of ska here and there, a vocalist who couldn't sing his way out of a paper bag, topical lyrics (war profiteering, illegal downloading, even an homage to J Church! Yes!), and a crashing, resounding sense of fun threaded throughout. One of those bands that defy description to me—they're just *punk*, you know? Super awesome and totally worth your time. —Keith Rosson (Geykido Comet)

MANIPULATORS, THEE:

Ease Up on the Breakdowns: LP

I knew nothing about this Vancouver band when I saw them except that it has some members of a couple of punk rock bands I used to do shows with. I wasn't prepared to have my head blown off! Thee Manips took the stage and destroyed it! Five piece garage punk trash with minimal organ that had the seething, drunken, electrical charge of prime New Bomb Turks or Rocket From The Crypt. Yes, they were that good. I bought an LP without hesitation. When I laid it on the turntable, my feelings were mixed. No, it's not that there is anything wrong with the record. It is excellent. The thing is that a lot of that amazing, frantic on stage energy isn't on the record. Luckily, the songs are amazing. With the organ way up in the front, they come off more along the lines of The Mummies than the Turks. That's pretty damn good to me. I would travel to see this band play again! —Ty Stranglehold (Neptoon)

MARVELOUS DARLINGS: "I'll Stand by Her" b/w "Friend of a Friend": 7"

You've got me. I have no idea what's distracting people on a large scale from great music because, by all accounts, Marvelous Darlings would fill stadiums in previous decades. In an underground lousy with garage bands deconstructing a perfectly good genre with "art concepts," Marvelous Darlings are the glitter platform boots with live gold fishes in 'em. They're the strutting aliens of power pop, with the angels and devils of Little Richard, Chuck Berry, and Eddie Cochran tattooed on 'em as guides. Marvelous Darlings are fun, tight, delightful, catchy... you know, powerful rock'n'roll with pursed lips and style. —Todd (Plastic Idol)

MASAKARI: *The Profit Feeds: LP*

I have read a few reviews of this before a copy finally dropped into my hands. I read references of His Hero Is Gone, From Ashes Rise, and Tragedy. I hear a little bit of that but for me I hear more Holy Mountain, Trap Them, and Iron Lung on this release. It's a major growth from their debut 7". A delivery of Southern, down-tuned heaviness—even though they are from Ohio—mixed with a hardcore, crust, and d-beat rage. Vocals that are screamed with an intensity that make me picture bile is being sprayed out of the vocalist's mouth. Their guitars go past the basic chords at times to create a more aggressive picture. The drummer seems more heavy-hitting

on this one with his pummeling hits and fast fills. The bass sounds so good this time around, too. A good mixture of really low tones mixed with a mid bass that cut through. Overall, the energy is never lost in these songs. Whether they are playing slow, mid-tempo, or fast, the execution of energy never dissipates. —Donofthead (Halo Of Flies)

MASSHYSSTERI: *Self-titled: LP*

I'll admit that I was shy on embracing Masshysteri after The Vicious broke up. It's like a relationship that ended too suddenly. I didn't want to go huggin' someone new else right after the split. The Swedes up in Umea and the Danes in Copenhagen have a knack of forming great bands that have a tendency to break up right as their records make it to America. What's undeniable is that Masshysteri have a lot to offer. For '77 punks, there's a swift, blunt kick backed with melody reminiscent of the Adverts and X-Ray Spex. For those in the early-Blondie and Nerves camps, there are subtle, tasteful musical additions—produced, but not excessive—of saxophone and keyboards. For us DIY punks who've never accepted that punk's a dead-end lifestyle over thirty years into the game and aren't into dressing up like Confederate dead or the Raider Nation of punk rock, who also miss both DS 13 and Gorilla Anorexia, Masshysteri are probably the best of all worlds. They're a present-day band that can stand shoulder-to-shoulder with any

punk band from the past you can throw at them. They're easy to listen to, haunted, fangy, infection-laden, electrifying, and instantly recognizable as punk by their sheer energy. Highest recommendation. —Todd (Feral Ward)

MAX LEVINE ENSEMBLE: *Them Steadily Depressing, Low Down Mind Messing, Post Modern Recession Blues: 7" EP*

I've been into these guys for a while now, on a casual basis—I've caught them live a couple times, and always enjoyed them, but never really listened to them on record. I've always enjoyed them, but chalk it up to being in different sub-scenes (with them more likely to be attending a political rally of some sort, myself more likely to be sitting around watching sitcoms and eating pizza). Listening to them at home, I feel like this is the bridge between Southern/Rocky Mountain sounds like ADD/C or Sexy and mid '90s skate punk, injected with their own politics. While the elements sound familiar, the final product ends up sounding like its own animal, which is a good thing. —Joe Evans III (Asian Man)

MENZINGERS, THE:

Chamberlin Awaits: CD

It seemed like certain quarters were pushing these guys so hard as the best thing going right now in the world of punk that I was kind of turned off from them for a while. Have I come around to thinking the Menzingers are the



saviors of modern punk? No. I don't think this would make even my top five albums of the year so far (although, maybe the upper reaches of my top ten). But, I do give it to these guys that they are a pretty damn good band. First off, the main singer (is it Tom May or Greg Barnett?) has a pretty distinct voice. It's kind of an over-enunciated mush mouth that's always on the verge of breaking into a scream. Musically, the band is tight in a Lawrence Arms / Smoke Or Fire type way that plays up melody over aggression. The song "Time Tables" is what nudges this over the bar for me. It's quite an excellent song about what may or may not have been an old fling. That would probably make it onto my 2010 highlight reel. "Rivalries," too, is quite a charmer of a ditty. Not everything is that strong on here for me, but to look past the hype, this is a pretty solid release. I'll probably actually want to listen to the record after this review is done, which is a good enough accomplishment for me. —Adrian (Red Scare)

MUCH WORSE: *Proper Execute*: EP

These guys have somewhat raised the bar for what I've come to expect from present day hardcore bands. They have a Japanese '80s hardcore influence, but are definitely from the Midwest. The music is fast, heavy, raw, and burly—all the ingredients you need in pursuit of what makes a quality hardcore band. The lyrics are sometimes strange (check out "Mudbrain"), but never dull, nor derivative. "Need New Sights" has

a great mid-'80s style breakdown to offset the manic thrash that makes up the majority of the tune. The songs are often on the fast side, but they use tempo changes wisely to accentuate the power. Certainly a band to get excited about. *Pass Judgement* only pressed 300 of the first edition up, and these are now sold out, but fret not, the repress should be out by the time you read this. —M.Avrq (Pass Judgement, passjudgementrecords.com)

NIGHT BIRDS: *Self-titled*: EP

You don't hear many bands take a stab at surf-inspired punk and it's for a good reason. Night Birds make it work though. Agent Orange? Nah. The Birds prefer Agression. I'm all but convinced that Mikey Erg can do no wrong. —Juan Espinosa (Grave Mistake/Dirtnap)

NO FRIENDS:

Traditional Failures: 12" EP

Heavy mid-'80s hardcore influence here, but they counteract any overactive sense of nostalgia with razor sharp delivery and an abundance of catchy hooks. Really, really good stuff here, on purty purple marbled wax, to boot. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kiss Of Death)

NOIA: *Self-titled*: CD

Pretty good, dancey, instrumental stuff with a lot of 8-bit synthesized beeps and bleeps made by a couple of French-Canadian dudes with awesome names. I like that the music. While experimental, it stays driving and structured-enough-sounding so

that it doesn't just seem like a dude wanking around with the dials on some electronic limiter for twenty minutes then shitting that out on tape. This also has just the right bit of bounce that it wouldn't kill the atmosphere to stick this on at a dance party. Due to the real bass and drums, it still sounds organic enough that it isn't like some lame ass DJ Tiesto house mega-mix album. Extra points for one of the dudes wearing a Municipal Waste shirt in the band picture. —Adrian (L'Oeil du Tigre, promotion@loeildutigre.com)

NOMEANSNO: *0+2=1½*:

Back in 1991 Nomeansno recorded their amazing record *0+2=1*. It was going to be a double album, but for some reason or another they pared it down, saving the rest of the songs they recorded for a future release. Not long after, guitarist and vocalist Andy Kerr left the band and the Wright brothers didn't feel comfortable with releasing the songs, so they disappeared. Mostly. Several of the songs wound up being re-recorded as a duo or with new guitarist Tom Holliston, but these original versions have never been heard outside the band until now. Andy Kerr found the tape of the songs in a shoe box and he and the band decided that it was time share it with the world. I love all of these songs, especially the one never-heard-before song "Now It's Dark." It's a ripper! These guys are amazing musicians and the demo stuff is all top notch quality. The finished songs are great, too, as they are ever-

so-slightly different than the versions that wound up being released. This is a great supplement to a great era of the band. The best part of all is that Nomeansno wants everyone to hear it. It is available for free download on their site (wrongrecords.ca/oneandahalf). I highly recommend getting it. —Ty Stranglehold (Wrong)

NOMEANSNO: *Tour E.P. No. 1*: 12"

I'm sure that the majority of *Razorcake* readers know who Nomeansno is, so I'll cut to the chase. A new four-song 12" EP from one of Canada's all-time greats. This is great news! There are two types of Nomeansno songs: the mind-boggling punk rock blasts with layers upon layers of intricateness or the slower, dirge-like tunes of equal intricateness that boil just under the surface. The tracks here are of the later group. Within the locked in rhythm there is an uneasiness floating through the songs. Loneliness has long been a theme with the band, and these songs seem to continue to chart those waters. A very good outing, but I need more of the upbeat stuff to keep me going. —Ty Stranglehold (Wrong)

NU SENSÆ:

TV, Death, and the Devil: LP

This is an auditory ass whoopin'. Nu Sensæ still have the jagged feel and throat-shredding shrieks and yells, but now they've added more low end for an even more sinister and menacing feel. Melody has also raised its ugly head, only to give this duo even more power. I

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hear people throw the “grunge” tag on these folks. I wish “grunge” was this good. I might have listened to that crap a little more. Nu Sensae are punker than hell, more hardcore than a fourteen-year-old kid in bootleg Black Flag shirt, and have a sound so gloriously dirty it’s almost beautiful. The punch and kick of “Sweet Thing” is great. The words are spit out with venom, then contrasted with an almost songy “You are...” response. “Total Drift” on the first side is a total ear grabber with a great melody and catchy rhythm, especially after the hammering of “New Lies.” Great stuff all throughout the record. But the one song that really stands out head and shoulders over the rest is “Passing the Word.” The song slows down to a mid tempo lurch, with the words being a combination of spoken and singing. It has a Southern California feel, like something that would have appeared on the *Hell Comes to Your House* compilation. Need I say more? —M.Avrq (Nominal, recordsnominal.com)

NUDE BEACH: Self-titled: LP

If Bent Outta Shape hadn’t existed would Nude Beach have ever have come to be? I’m in no position to make that decision, but Nude Beach definitely know how to play their goddamn instruments. And it sounds like they love The Boss as much as those Bent boys. If you get all weak in the knees at the idea of three dudes from Brooklyn playing Springsteen meets the Clash, welcome to your new

favorite record to listen to while you get drunk. —Daryl (Mandible)

OI POLLOI: *Ar Ceol, Ar Canan, Ar-A-Mach*: CD

A 2006 album getting the reissue treatment, significant because I believe it’s the first full-length the long-running anarcho band did while keeping all their lyrics in Gaelic. Well, twenty-five years after the band’s inception, *Ar Ceol, Ar Canan, Ar-A-Mach* finds them still sticking pretty firmly to their roots—crust with the occasional streetpunk/oi jab thrown in. Strangely enough, this album also has moments of indelicate, kind of bumbling electronica and keyboards scattered throughout, though to their credit it’s always tempered with a fevered sense of immediacy and speed. I like these guys. Their lyrics have always come across as a little simplistic (anarcho punk as a whole could be called out on that one) but I like their ideas and their willingness to tackle difficult subjects unflinchingly, and that they see things through a slightly sharper lens than many of their compatriots. English translations are provided, as are contacts to radical resources and language preservation websites. —Keith Rosson, (Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

OUR BAND SUCKS: *Pic’n Save*: CDEP

OBS was an East L.A. punk band formed in the late ‘80s. Funny, caustic, flamboyant, they would go on to release a record on Nemesis and get banned from a long list of clubs in

the Southland. Their music was a mix of first wave English punk—aware of it or not, they channeled a ton of Cock Sparrer—and “pushing buttons” punk like Fear, the Angry Samoans, and the Meatmen. As seems to be an unfortunate pattern in East L.A. punk, someone in the band got mad, someone quit, someone’s feelings got hurt, drinking and drugs caught up, someone felt ripped off, and OBS came to a screeching halt in the late ‘90s. They were selling these CDEPs at their twenty-year anniversary show a couple months ago. The show was wonderfully dysfunctional and theatrical. Fat. Old. Sweaty. Out of breath. Perfect. These four songs fit right into their nineteen-song set without a hiccup. Glad to see ‘em back and here’s to hoping that it’s not just a time capsule, but the start of another run for these guys. —Todd (Self-released)

PANIC ATTACK: *Rick Moranis*: EP

I feel like Quebec City is on another continent completely. One hears very little English being spoken whatsoever when walking the distinctly European-looking streets (which is quite untrue of its closest neighboring major city, Montreal). Also, the independent music community in Quebec City has always seemed truly independent, i.e. existing separately from any other major musical epicenter. This could be due to the language barrier, or simply that QC isn’t exactly close to any English-speaking capital cities. Regardless, I recently

had the immense pleasure of playing in Quebec City with three incredible local bands (and that band from San Diego... what’re they called again? Oh ya, Tiltwheel), and was totally blown away by the quality of songwriting and musicianship in each band, but it’s safe to say that the opener, Panic Attack, was my favorite of the night—perhaps the entire tour. Upon receiving a copy of this EP, I was informed by the vocalist/guitarist Frank that the recording quality is somewhat subpar, but I wasn’t concerned. The songs I’d just heard/seen would be great no matter what. Crazy catchy, upbeat, somewhat rough pop punk taking some serious cues from the Green Day songwriting school, but with enough aggression and a youthful approach that totally sets them apart and makes them charming as hell. I can’t wait to hear these boys’ first proper record. It’s going to be a doozy, no doubt. —Dave Williams (Self-released, myspace.com/panicattackqc)

PEACE CORPSE: *Terror of Quincy*: LP

If memory serves, Peace Corpse evolved from a joke band called Moslem Birth, whose primary purpose was to take the piss outta Christian Death. Fronted by Toxic Shock head honcho Bill Sassenberger and featuring over the years members of Thee Undertakers, Insulin Reaction, and Man Is The Bastard, the band’s sound evolved over time from solid mid-tempo and slower punk with snotty vocals to something a bit more evolved and complex in delivery,

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while retaining the slyly topical, smart-assed-yet-intelligent lyrical content throughout. Collected here are all the tracks from the *Life Death and Quincy 7"* EP on side one and selected tracks from their later *Terror of History* LP. Nice hearing this stuff again, especially old favorites like "Jocko Macho (Quincy Punks)." —Jimmy Alvarado (Toxic Shock)

PERCULATORS: *White Trash*: EP

Three spastic and energetic songs fueled by pills and booze on the first side of this 7". Not unlike Henry Fiat's Open Sore, but with male and female vocals trading off. Side B is where the reckless highs become dark and paranoid lows making for a much more interesting listen. I do love it when bands demonstrate split personalities in their music the way Perculators do. Limited to 300 copies and well worth seeking. —Juan Espinosa (Ken Rock, mspace.com/theperculators)

PERE UBU:

Bring Me the Head of Ubu Roi: CD

There are parallels between Pere Ubu and The Fall that simply don't exist between any other two groups of the post-punk era: Both "bands" have been around for more than three decades; Pere Ubu and The Fall have one sole constant member (David Thomas in the case of the former, Mark E. Smith in the latter); both "front men" have really transcended basic rock music, branching out into scoring plays and writing lyrics that owe greater debt

to the novels of Philip K. Dick and Dashiell Hammett than to the pop songs of Chuck Berry. And in this recent outing, David Thomas has paid tribute to someone he's looked up to for quite some time: French playwright Alfred Jarry. Thomas has called this album a radio play—a throwback to the pre-television era when radio was the main source of mass communication and entertainment in the home (think of Welles' rendition of *War of the Worlds*)—and it's certainly apt. What Thomas and Pere Ubu have done is set Jarry's seminal play *Ubu Roi* to music and the results are astonishing. Lyrically, Thomas was dealing with one of the most important works of the avant garde. Jarry's influence can't be overestimated: dada, Surrealism, Situationist texts, punk—they've all been influenced by Jarry—Greil Marcus has written at length about these obvious connections. Of course, this production could've fallen straight on its face had Pere Ubu not interpreted and arranged the music to Jarry's play so well. Vocally, Thomas is his usual, caustic self, sounding like Beefheart's lost son. The complexity of Pere Ubu's music on *Bring Me the Head of Ubu Roi* is acute—odd time signatures, incredible dynamics, and guitar playing (at times) reminiscent of its *Dub Housing* years. Simply incredible. It's interesting to note that this album will likely alienate Pere Ubu fans simply looking for more material in the vein of the group's late '70s work. There really isn't much of an audience for

this record. And the amount of effort put into it is astonishing. In the words of Alfred Jarry: "Shit." —Ryan Leach (Ubu Projex, ubuprojex.net)

PINE AWAY:

The Barefoot Feel: Cassette

This tape is really something. It's really nice, warm-sounding stuff that becomes a bit intangible when you try to put your finger on it. It's punk in spirit but a little bit too tricky to fit into that box. You could label it post-punk, but that's just a shitty cop-out term. It's too cheerful to be called emo although what it reminds me of most is those more upbeat One Last Wish songs. While it's not quite pop, it is lively and melodic. Each song has a whole lot of lyrics that lack choruses giving the listener a nearly whole narrative. If they had just a bit more information in the songs, they would make great pieces in a personal zine. Instead, you just get some great songs about living life. I could see this band being appreciated by pop punk fans, hardcore kids, punks, and even some indie rockers, yet, it sounds like none of that stuff. I guess it is still possible to make something that sounds completely new. —Craven Rock (Fully Intercoastal)

PINE HILL HAINTS / TRAINWRECK

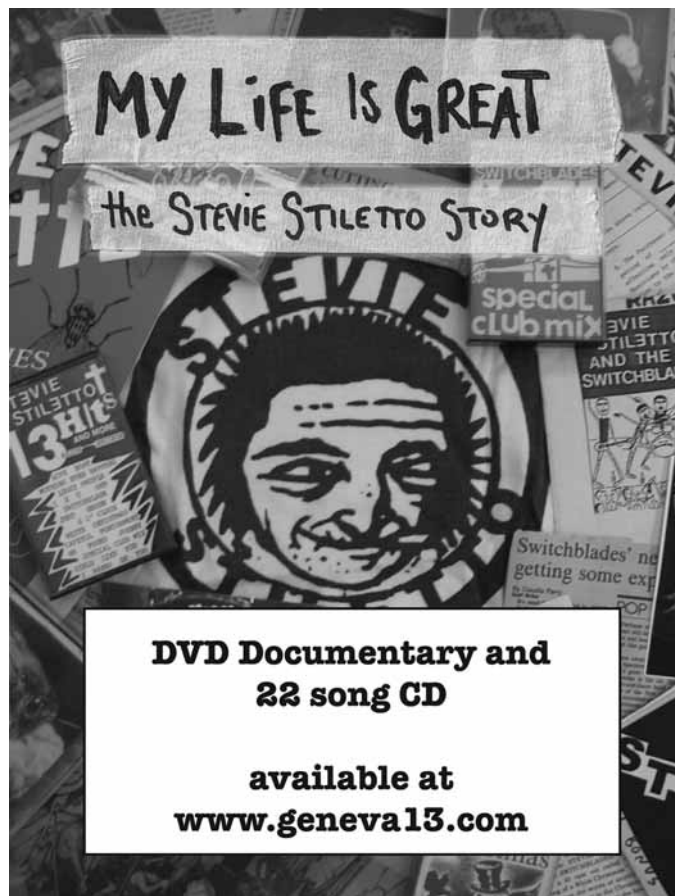
Riders: Split: 7"

Pine Hill Haints: Punk can be a weird cat. Give the tattoo-sleeved, spiky-haired, leather-jacketed fellow or maiden a couple of years and chances are about even that they'll

turn into a Republican asshole selling insurance and denouncing their youthful indiscretion. The Pine Hill Haints play traditional music with traditional instruments (bucket bass, banjo, mandolin, accordion, guitar) that's haunted, honest, and eerie. They also just happen to believe, live, and breathe in DIY and not fucking others over. So, what may not sound "punk" to those on the periphery is ten times more genuine a gesture than a receding hairline mohawk interpretation of music. Trainwreck Riders: fans of Ninja Gun, Two-Cow Garage, and Drive-By Truckers take note. Jumpy, pleasant, faded denim, comfortable shirt traditionals played with songwriting savvy and current-day snap. —Todd (Let's Pretend, letspretendrecords.com)

POST REGIMENT: *Czarzly*: LP

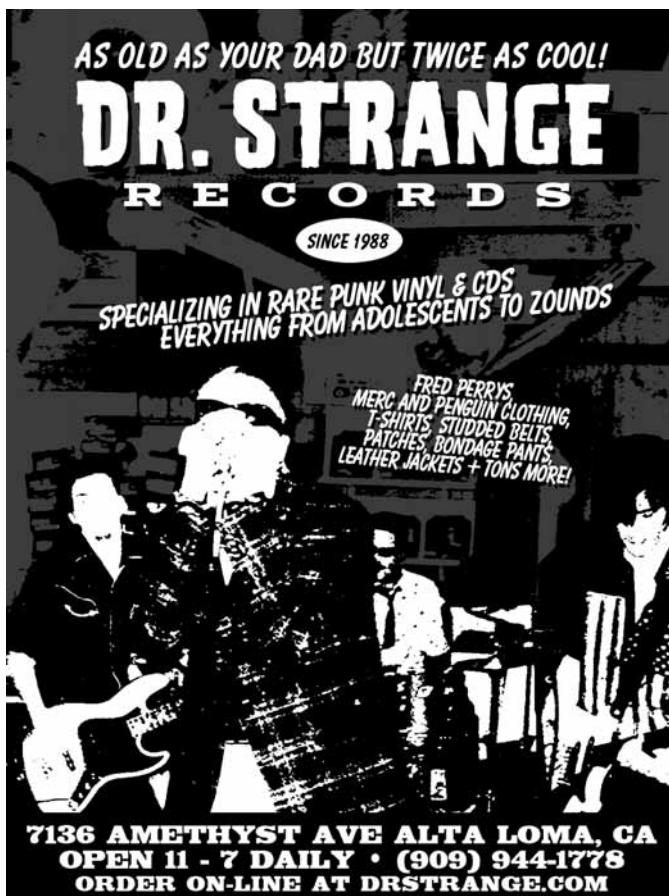
Nice! A re-press of their second LP by this legendary band from Poland. My love for Polish punk with female vocals does lead back to this band. To actually own a copy is a treat. I missed the boat the first time around due to it not being on my radar at time of release. But I did manage to get a download. From what I can tell, there was great care to re-release it with the original artwork for the cover. Not sure about the liner notes though. I have nothing to compare it to. But what is important is the music. It's one of those few records where you can play from start to finish, flip it over, and listen over and over. It's



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charging hardcore punk that does not lose its melody while straying beyond the boundaries of the conventional to add to the originality. Matching the dynamic attack of the vocals is the supreme musicianship of the guitarist. You get an aural experience from the textures and emotions he brings to the songs. Listening to current bands like El Banda, Slowa We Krwi and Eye For An Eye, also from Poland, you can hear how influential this band was. —Donofthedeat (Nikt Nic Nie Wie)

PRETTY BOY THORSON / THE ANCHOR: Split: 7"

Jesse Thorson has a beautiful singing voice. There, I said it. If John Cougar let a mean streak out in his music, was a DIY punk, and had a Civil War monkey farting as his insert's illustration, he'd sound like Jesse. One original, one Cock Sparrer cover. I like the original better. The Anchor: Make me think of dueling throat polyps and barnacles. They didn't make the boat they're sailing on, but it sounds like they've been hanging on for a long time, underwater, and aren't letting go any time soon. Kyle, you're right. The blue/grey vinyl with the silver label looks snazzy. —Todd (Muy Autentico)

PROMISES: Hopeless Sons: CD

Decent "old-school" hardcore with that kinda updated West Coast sound. Y'know, that sorta serious Go It Alone/ Another Breath-type aesthetic—black and white cityscape artwork, atypically (for the genre) personal lyrics. This

stuff doesn't really hold my attention for very long anymore, but I imagine there are a ton of kids who are down with the Panic/Rivalry/etc. scene who would be wild about these dudes. Well-executed, but just not a whole lot brought to the table that's gonna have me going back for more. —Dave Williams (Pee)

PSYCHO: Studio Recordings 1982-86: CD

Psycho is one of those bands that, for some odd reason or another, have never gotten the attention they deserve. Over their nearly thirty-year existence they've managed about a billion releases chock full of some of the best thrash you're gonna find, and they're still alive and kicking. If you have yet to hear anything by 'em thus far, consider this a prime starting point. Collected here are their early works from the years in the CD's title: a 1982 demo, 1983's *8-Song* EP, two demos from 1984, the *Son of 8-Song* EP, and the *Hosebags from Hell* LP along with tracks from assorted split releases and compilations, for a total of forty-five tracks. The tunes run the gamut from almost poppy punk to full-bore hardcore, with no shortage of anger or humor. Nice to see these guys get some long overdue respect. —Jimmy Alvarado (Welfare)

PTL KLUB: Complete Discography: CD

Another band that's more or less been lost to time as far as most punker punters are concerned, PTL Klub were a Massachusetts band active in the

mid-'80s that took their name from the scandal-plagued christian TV show run by Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, and specialized in frantic, angry hardcore. Collected here is virtually all of their recorded output—the *Psalm #7* demo, the *13 Commandments* LP, a compilation track, and the *Living Death*, *Living Death 2* and *Nobody Cares Anymore 7"*s. If you ain't hip to 'em yet, there literally is no better place to start. —Jimmy Alvarado (Welfare)

PULSES, THE: 10 Song Demo: 12"

Straightforward, stripped-down, garage-y sound mixed with a bit of art- and math-rock, and really satisfying—sometimes four-track recordings are as refreshing as cold beer on a hot afternoon. This record is ten songs from a ten-year-old, out of print thirty-song demo, and it reminds me of early Invisible Men 7"s, only less trashy, more musically sound, and a bit more avant garde-ish. All in all, there really ain't much more to say since this is such a what-you-see-is-what-you-get type of record. The chorus of the last song pretty much says it all: "processed sound makes me ill." Colored vinyl, too. —The Lord Kveldulfr (Wolf Dog)

QUEST FOR FIRE: Self-titled: LP

You know what sucks? Ignoring a band for years and then accidentally stumbling into a random Minneapolis basement for one of their last shows, only to find out that you have been missing out on something super awesome. Is there a way for me to take back all those times

I ignored my friends when they would say, "Quest for Fire is playing. You should go."? No, but at least I got the fucking consolation prize. The band's awesomeness is captured on this, their last recording. This music isn't metal or punk or hardcore or thrash or any of that. It's a silver sword gleaming in the sun before being plunged into the heart of a giant serpent. It's the serpent's hot blood spattering across the faces of the peasants standing idly by as their god is killed. It's the melting flesh dripping from those peasants' faces onto the desert sand. —MP Johnson (Chain Smoking)

R.O.C.: The Sum of All Beers: 7"

Lightning fast thrash from Vancouver B.C. Relentless drums and searing guitar is the order of the day. Not really all that decipherable in the lyric department, but judging by song titles like "Thrash Your Way to a Better Life," "Burger Shots," and "Rape the Pavement," these boys like to skate and have fun. The ten songs on here just fly by. Flip up your brim and give it a play. —Ty Stranglehold (R.O.C.)

RAW NERVE: Self-titled: LP

This is the band Raw Nerve from Chicago. I've been waiting for this record for a while. I heard the first 7" they put out on Video Disease and put "Teens in Heat" on about a hundred mixes. The guitars and vocals on this one (like the 7") have tons of reverb on them and give the recording a thick feel. Most of the songs are great and hover around the thirty-second

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A cartoon cat wearing a striped shirt and pants, standing with its arms crossed.

RON EMORY: *Walk That Walk*: CD

Solo debut from T.S.O.L. guitarist. Some of these songs are over twenty years old, but it flows together quite nicely. Emory's vocals have a Lou Reed vibe, but the music definitely rocks harder. Mike Roche helps out on a few songs, and Tiny plays drums on the whole release, so the T.S.O.L. feel is present. Some guests contribute—some welcome (Fletcher and Dexter)—and some not (Tim Armstrong and Mark McGrath). But Emory doesn't need guests to make these songs shine out. "Alone in the Dark" is cool enough to carry the load. The only misstep is the bonus DVD. Although it's okay to talk about how God saved you from your addictions, there was a little too much Jesus talk for me. I just felt like I was being preached to half the time. But you can buy it without the DVD, so keep that in mind. —Sean Koepenick (Self-released)

RUBELLA BALLET:***Never Mind the Day-Glo*: CD**

Rubella Ballet were/are one of the longest surviving of the initial cluster of U.K. anarcho-punk groups that spawned Crass, Flux Of Pink Indians, Poison Girls, and all the others who are now T-shirt and patch staples, starting off at roughly the same time as that lot and managing to stick it out in various forms to the present day. While they definitely shared many of the same concerns and lyrical subject matter as their contemporaries, Rubella Ballet set themselves apart by donning daytime clothing instead of the de rigueur

black and opting to tinge their musical racket with pop and what would now be considered "goth" sensibilities. This, the second of a two-part reissue of their recorded output collects the *IF* and *At the End of the Rainbow* LPs, 42f and *Arctic Flowers* EPs, and serves as a one-stop source for what apparently was the band's most prolific and commercially successful period. The production may be a bit cleaner than on their earlier works, and become more so as the disc goes on, but the songs are no less catchy and edgy, alternating for oddly dark yet danceable tracks with bubbling bass lines to the obligatory punk ravers. Myopic simps looking only for stuff that mirrors the cacophonous caterwauling of later Crass and Flux will be sorely disappointed, but for those with more nuanced tastes, this'll more than handily deliver the goods. —Jimmy Alvarado (overgroundrecords.com)

SEDATIVES: *Self-titled*: LP

Hot on the heels of last issue's 7" (or maybe it was the other way around and I just picked 'em up in the wrong order) comes a full length from these guys, chock full of straightforward, mid-tempo punk with much thud and keyboard accentuations. A solid release all the way 'round. —Jimmy Alvarado (Deranged)

SELFISH / FORCA MACABRA:***Split*: Cassette**

Had some pretty high hopes for this tape. I think pretty highly of both bands here. Selfish have always been a devastating band, and early Forca

Macabra is undeniably great in the fast and raw hardcore department. However, the recordings on this tape seem to have sucked the oxygen out of the room. Material from both bands is from live sets: Selfish on November 11, 2002, and Forca Macabra from November 2003. I didn't think it was possible for Selfish to sound flat and dull. This tape does just that. Forca Macabra fair a little bit better. The sound is slightly fuller, but still flat and kind of just there. Ehhhh... If you're lucky enough to see these bands live, awesome. I envy you. For now, I'll just stick to the studio recordings and pass this tape on. —M.Avrq (Not Very Nice, chaosnonmusica@gmail.com)

SENDERS: *Recovery*: 7" EP

You may remember these guys from Gainesville, Florida; they did a split with Wavelets earlier this year. Self-described as stoner emo, these two new songs, "Cuffed" and "Near Freeport" show off their affinity to '90s alt rock, namely The Smashing Pumpkins. "Cuffed" sounds like an extension of *Siamese Dream*, citing transitions from "Today", while "Near Freeport" has more guitar riffs and screamo vocals. If KROQ in the '90s is your thing, these should be enough to whet your appetite until their next release. —Kristen K. (Kiss Of Death)

SICK/TIRED: *High Life*: LP

Sick/Tired sure do know how to blur the lines between the genres of grindcore, party thrash, and stoner sludge (I refuse

to call anything stoner rock because it conjures up images of Fu Manchu and that's a sandwich I'd rather not bite into again.) The word "blur" is by no means an understatement in describing the mayhem unleashed when the needle hits the record. B's a plenty: blast beats, bile-spewing vocals, and bulldozing guitar riffage are crammed into every groove of this platter. However, I'm a bit sad to report that despite how good it looks on paper, I don't see myself fishing this out of my collection too often. It's a fun listen for sure and it's not to say that there is anything particularly wrong with this album. You could definitely do a lot worse. You could be listening to Fu Manchu. —Juan Espinosa (To Live A Lie, tolivealie.com)

SLOPPY SECONDS:***You Can't Kill Joey Ramone*: 7"**

Unfortunately, you *can* kill Joey Ramone, but the reemergence of Sloppy Seconds these past couple of years is making a lot of us very fucking happy. Sloppy Seconds were pop punk before there was pop punk. They were one of a handful of progenitors of the now-familiar sound that grabbed the underground by its then sagging scrotum, only to be quickly co-opted by the mainstream. The scene cruelly turned its back on pop punk, despite its deep resonance with a half generation. Sloppy Seconds retains creds for being one of the first of its type, as well as one of the best. Especially known for incredible live shows, their records aren't too shabby

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either. This 7" contains "You Can't Kill Joey Ramone" from the 2008 album *Endless Bummer*, backed with a cover of "Can't Stand Rock'n'Roll" by the Anti-Nowhere League. Not as essential as the recent souped-up vinyl reissue of *Destroyed*, this 7" is still one that collectors won't want to miss. Is it blasphemy to admit that I'd rather listen to Sloppy Seconds than the Ramones most days? —Art Ettinger (Wallride)

**SMELL OF MY ROOM, THE:
Volume One: Drug Sounds: CD**

I was expecting something really weird here, especially when I tried looking up the label to find more info, only to find a site that makes it look like the whole thing is just a tax write-off or money laundering scheme. The songs have influences ranging from later-era Smiths to some of the mid-to-late '90s Epitaph garage/rock'n'roll, in part due to its slick production. However, the whole album is practically repeated in "demo" form, which, to me, sounds like the exact same versions but with a whole ton of gain added so everything sounds distorted and "rough." I can't really decide which versions I like better, though it's probably a better idea to leave the straight-up goofy demos off there. —Joe Evans III (NMG)

**SMOKEJUMPER / PILLOWFIGHTS,
THE: Split: 7"**

Smokejumper: I'm aware they're a new band, but my best way I can think to describe them is that I saw them in

a New Jersey VFW Hall in 1998. They played with a bunch of generally pop punk bands, and played what I assumed was a cover (again, I can't keep track of all of these covers these days). The Pillowfights: They played the same hall in 2003. A little more of a Jade Tree hardcore sound that veers more towards cutesy than chugga chugga, in the vein of Lifetime, or stretching, the Bouncing Souls. It mildly bothers me that their side seems to end with the "serious" song. It's a fact that you're supposed to end on the laugh (unless this is meant as the cliffhanger, in which case shame on me). —Joe Evans III (Silver Sprocket)

SOPORS: Golden Era #267: LP

Containing members of the Abi Yoyos, Parasites Go!, and Shakey Bones, Sopors are one of the Bay Area's best new bands. With Matt and Spenser plucking away on their guitars and singing their strange songs, you just can't find a more beautifully perplexing group of tunes. Some may say that I'm giving these guys too much credit, but I see Sopors as a mix between the hooky leads and cohesion of the Marked Men, and the blobby, noisy, questioning chaos of Fleshies. The guitars weave pop melodies into braids of sound while the lyrics plant literary references next to tales of self-seeking time travel, as well as your usual anxieties. It's great to see these songs on vinyl after spending too long on poorly duplicated cassettes. —Daryl (Mongobongo Top Ten Hits)

**STANDARD AND POOR:
What's in the Big Black Bag?: CD**

Basic bowling night punk that holds out the promise of being more interesting than it actually is—not to mention more Crampsy than it actually is ((which is "not at all"))—on accounta it's got a hot Bettie Page type chick on the cover. A few songs sound like Americanized versions of U.K. Riot City Records-type punk circa '82, a few others sound kinda like those Ramones songs where Dee Dee sang, and "Liar" sounds the most like the Sex Pistols, although it is, curiously, not the Pistols song of the same name. The record contains not one but THREE songs—"I Wanna Go Back," "Middle Earth," "Taken Too Young"—which are essentially big lists of bands and/or punks and/or records they used to like back in the day. I'm not necessarily opposed to a little nostalgia trippin', but if there's a way to achieve greatness by association via invoking the past, this ain't it. The kick and snare drums sound triggered sometimes ((though not all the time)), which i hate, even if i'm just imagining it. Tony has a cool guitar strap. The girl looks nice. BEST SONG: "Sex Doll" BEST SONG TITLE: "What's in the Big Black Bag?" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Don't bother to sit thru the eight minutes of church bells at the end of "Religious Right." There is nothing at the end but a fade out. —Rev. Nørb (Unrepentant)

**STEEL TIGERS OF DEATH /
ANDROID HERO: Split: 7" EP**

STOD: I want more splatter. Their tracks are well-played and well-recorded. But I can't shake the icy feeling of Jawbox or the cooler climes of "calculation rock." Because when I saw them live, it was like that part in the *Green Berets* where John Wayne's fellow marine gets whacked by a bamboo booby trap. Jungle sneaking. Snap. Eek. Blood and bullets flying. That's the image I have of STOD in my "happy rock place." Android Hero: I want more anxiety. Their tracks are well-played and well-recorded, in the vein of Nomeansno, where the complexity is a gateway drug to tension. But where Nomeansno seems about to become unhinged at any second and have your stereo explode, the edges to Android Hero are well defined. Anxiety will be the loose, nervy wiggle that turns into a hook for repeated listens. I do, however, have a soft spot for any songs about thrift stores. —Todd (Mustardpack, mustardpack.com)

**SUNDOWNER:
We Chase the Waves: CD**

Side project from Chris McCaughan of The Lawrence Arms. Although I don't count myself as a member of that band's fan club, I actually dig this record. "As The Crow Flies" could actually be a long-lost Son Volt song. But I'm pretty sure seeing McCaughan perform these songs would be more exciting than seeing Son Volt live,

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since Son Volt is a total snoozefest. These songs also celebrate baseball and living in the Midwest. It's real and it's honest. Hopefully that's enough of a reason for you to give this a chance. —Sean Koeppenick (Asian Man)

SUSPECT PARTS: Self-titled: Cassette

I was hesitant to throw this on, because A.) I haven't had a cassette player since I stopped driving a Toyota Paseo in 2005, and B.) The cover art made me think this was gonna be some kind of sleazy trash rock, which is a genre I usually just find irritating and bereft of ideas. Thanks to an included download card I was actually able to give this a listen, and I'm glad I did. My first thought upon listening was, "Wow, this sounds a lot like a lower budget version of the last Clorox Girls album." I was disappointed with *J'aime le Filles* at first, since I was expecting it to be more like the first two Clorox Girls LPs, but once I realized that I should look towards the record more as a full-on power pop album rather than a fifteen-minute punk album, I realized it was great. Once I looked up the band, I realized it was composed of lead Clorox Girl and Ex-Red Don Justin Maurer, one-time Clorox Girl and Red Don Daniel Husayn, Chris from another one of my favorites, The Briefs, and James Sullivan of the Ripchords, who I admit I have never heard. So, basically, this is eight tracks of no frills, garagey, power pop greatness. "17 Television" is the greatest dark pop song the Adverts never did. "Change Your Mind" could

easily fit between Buddy Holly and the Sonics in someone's DJ set and the cover of the Crystal's "Then He Kissed Me" is quite sublime. Really there is no daft tracks among the eight songs here, so check these guys out if you can luck into the original singles or one of the two hundred cassettes made up. —Adrian (Ggnzla)

SYSTEMATIC DEATH / SEE YOU IN HELL: Split: EP

You're going to want this because it's Systematic Death, but prepare to be blown away by See You In Hell. I find myself listening to their two songs over and over. Featuring an ex-member of Mrtva Budoucnost, and having been around for a number of years, See You In Hell crank out some heavy and powerful hardcore punk with a definite Japanese influence, but they're not a clone band by any means. The bass has an awesome sinister tone at the beginning of "Od Narozeni" that only hints at the blazing power in the rest of the song. "Krize II" is a total ripper that starts off with a soundtrack from a thunderstorm then rips wide open with a crushing force. So f'n awesome, it just about blows my mind. Systematic Death are back from the dead and just as awesome today as they were back then. Fast, tight, and catchy hardcore punk that leaves the listener agog. "Life" is an instantly memorable song that shifts back and forth from mid to fast tempos, and a repetitive beat that hooks you in. "Switch" is fast, wound up, and races at a break neck speed

with some stop go parts that border on sending everything into a wild tailspin. This record was put together for their joint European tour from earlier this summer. I can only imagine how awesome the shows were. —M.Avrq (Insane Society, insanesociety.net)

TEENAGE KICKS: Uptight!: LP

I liked this Houston band enough to mail-order their 7", which was cool pop punk far less boilerplate than their band name would imply. This album—apparently their first, last and only—is a bit harder to digest, though. It's eleven uniformly mid-tempo ("we promised we'd never play faster/one year later it's a fucking disaster") poppish punkers with a vague ((though not unexpected)) '70s U.K. influence... sort of like if you took the Clash's "Give 'Em Enough Rope" LP, and subtracted everything from it that could possibly remind you of Rancid ((which would be just about everything)), then used that as a framework off of a which a band that melds the angstiness of the Connie Dungs re-directed towards youth politics with the occasionally ho-hum pop-punk chug of, say, Parade ((or am i thinking of Pariah? Well, some band that starts with "PAR" and isn't the Parasites)) can cobble together their intended swan song magnum opus ((although the only Clash album referenced in the lyrics is the first one, so go figure)), i think. Not a terrible plan, really ((if you understood any of that)); my main complaint is that some of these songs just seem awkwardly

constructed, following sometimes bizarrely-accentuated lyrics of a decidedly atypical narrative bent. I mean, not like i was there peering over their shoulders when they wrote this album, but it really seems to me that their lyrics guy just wrote a bunch of stuff out on notebook paper, then tried to write music that would follow along to the lyrics, as opposed to the more conventional approach of writing music and then putting words to it. Not that i'm any kind of produce manager of note, but that's rarely a good way to run a supermarket. Still, overall a pretty interesting listen, though i sort of wish the band would have called themselves "There Goes Norman" instead. BEST SONG: "Our Last Song" BEST SONG TITLE: "I ((heart)) Lora Logic" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: Ray Luhan was in Parade, Pariah, AND the Parasites. See? I TOLD you it was fantastic and amazing. —Rev. Nørh (Team Science)

TEENANGER: Give Me Pink: LP

Rudimentary, verb-drenched garage rock with flat vocals that bring to mind Redd Kross's Jeff McDonald. —Jimmy Alvarado (Telephone Explosion)

THIS MOMENT IN BLACK HISTORY / SUN GOD: The Paul EP: Split 12"

TMIBH: These three new songs just exemplify what I think is so great about their most recent LP; *Public Square*. The stew may be boiling over the edge of the pot, but it doesn't matter because the magic works best at



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ER-17 MOSCOW MOSCOW MOSCOW - Fans of Stalin Show Yer Bottom 7"

As the only Russian-themed surf band to play on Tetrax cubes, Moscow Moscow Moscow are treading some new waters in surf punk. They've managed to fit four of their explosive tunes onto their first seven-inch release (three instrumentals, and one with vocals). You'll hardly believe MMM is merely a two-piece: Red Sonja and Dennis the Red Menace. Fighting back the flying saucer attack with high-voltage songs. Teheaper than Tchaikovsky! Limited to 500 on yellow vinyl. \$5

ER-15 THE PERENNIALS - My Side of the Mountain 7"

I had been walking around town for several months with these songs in my head, when it suddenly struck me: the rest of the world needs to hear this! The Perennials' (Indianapolis, IN) first seven-inch release on Eradicator Records consists of three garage-rock songs, performed by members of The Mams, Eric & the Happy Thoughts, and The Half Rats. Chris's raw singing style, Alex's thumping bass lines, and Ryan's upbeat drumming is guaranteed to get anyone moving. So sweet and catchy that it might just give you a stomachache! Limited to 400. \$5

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those scalding temperatures. And when they get to the stoney part of the song, they really let you know. This band has got the fucking riffs! Bridging the gaps between rockin' garage punk and dirty hardcore is no easy task, but TMIBH has been killing it for years. Sun God: people from 9 Shocks Terror and Homostupids playing poppish, textured punk that has more in common with *Zen Arcade* than *Zen and the Art of Beating Your Ass*. Mature in the sense that all the songs come off as thought out and meticulously executed. Like how you might describe Pegboy as mature. Fucking awesome split. The songs are long, loud, and the packaging is amazingly silk screened. —Daryl (Smog Veil/Snax/Pizza Pants)

THOU: *Baton Rouge, You Have Much to Answer for*: 12" EP

Thou somehow manage to consistently put out fully realized records with obviously thoughtful artwork and meticulous packaging. And they do so at a pace that makes me embarrassed of how slowly my own musical endeavors come together. This release, their most recent 12" EP (it's four songs, but each side is about fifteen minutes, so "EP" is sort of misleading) sums up most things I love about the band. Their earlier releases were heavy, but focused on slow parts with really pretty-sounding guitar harmonies. I loved it, but recently they've picked up the pace a little and have gotten much, much more dissonant in their sound. This record is no less abrasive than the "Smoke Pigs"

track they contributed their split with Black September, but they have some spacey, jammy parts that go well with their sludge aesthetic and help the record flow better as a long player. The tracks here also seem less disjointed than songs on *Tyrant* or *Peasant*, both of which had some awkward changes. Of course, the packaging is great, as the band partnered with the always diligent Robotic Empire, the only people who may actually be nerdier than Thou about vinyl packaging. —Ian Wise (Robotic Empire)

TILTWHEEL: *The High Hate Us*: LP

This record is pretty much useless. It won't change the fact that the guy I have a crush on doesn't have a crush on me. But when I listen to "Make Like a Tree and Fuck Off," I realize that he won't ever call me a stupid cunt, either. It won't fix my leaky toilet but "Shit Your Pants (A Rock Opera)" makes one's trousers seem like a viable, and even cool, alternative. It won't cure my homesickness. But "Get Your Gentrification out of My Aburguesamiento" reminds me of the time "Slayer" a.k.a. Tiltwheel got banned from Scolari's in San Diego. It's now The Office, a better-smelling haven for the shiny-shirted where the sweet sound of distortion rings no more. So maybe what I am homesick for might not be there when I get back. But San Diego folks being San Diego folks, they'll come up with something even cooler. This record won't stop the United States from increasingly accumulating

the features of a developing country but "Teach Your Children Hell" is the perfect answer to people who lament that punk has become too much about partying. Rather than attacking the politics that will become stale, it goes after the roots of why politics suck. I guess I really don't have anything to complain about. I didn't even pay for this record. I downloaded it from some site in Chile where "Talkin' About Eating Pussy and Drinking a Bucket Full of Cum in a Town Full of Pig Pens" is translated as "Hablando de Comer el Coño y Beber un Cubo Lleno de Semen en un Pueblo Lleno de Plumas de Cerdo" But when the day comes that I am reunited with my record player, I'll certainly snap up the burrito-swirl colored-vinyl version. 'Cause all the songs are pertylike and magic poetry. —Lisa Weiss (ADD)

TOWERS / TAKE DOWN YOUR ART: *Split*: 10"

This thing was recorded in 2005, but it just came out a few weeks ago. I don't know what happened. In any case, the Towers side of this thing is about as good as any Towers record, which means it's fucking awesome. The production is a little bit raw, but it suits the style, which is sort of a heavy, Melvins-inspired interpretation of the more interesting side of late '90s punk. Kinda. They remind me a lot of early Refused. None of this is making any sense, but the heavy riffs on songs like "Training to Be a Cage Fighter" are great, but it's the spacey parts with minimal guitar work that really flesh

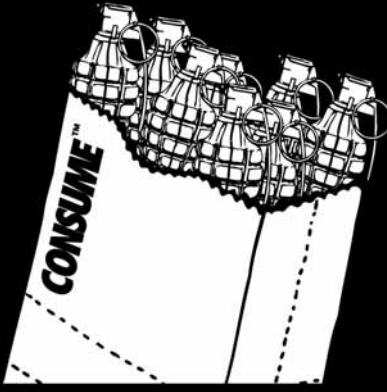
out the band's sound. Sadly, the Take Down Your Art side does absolutely nothing for me. It sounds weak and uninspired, and they have lyrics about the phoenix and drowning in the sky or something, which is screams "teenage art school student" so loud that it makes my ears bleed. —Ian Wise (Somberlain)

TRUST: *Mythic Maps*: EP

Glad as hell I picked this up. Sounds like Om meets Tarantula Hawk and Yeti. Apparently this is only a duo, yet they sound like a full band. There's a heaviness that's undeniable, and there are solid riffs throughout. Sometimes I think I hear a keyboard in there, but it's only a guitar. "Mythic Maps Pt. 1" has some of the best lyrics I've heard in a while, "Earth—wormholes within reach, gates to psychic journeys through the endless unknown space," makes me wonder if they have consumed heavy amounts of 1970s science-fiction. All the songs are based around space travel, and they really hit their mark on "Van Gogh's Ear", which has a strong drive, but the real strength is in the break where the vocals harmonize and the music quiets down before lurching back into the main riff. Impressive that a prog band can put out a four-song EP with as much power as it has. Makes me wonder what they could do with a full LP. Hope I get to find out. —M.Avr (Red Tape, redtape.dk)

TUNDRA FUCKS, THE: *Hanging around Here*: 7"

A great batch of fuzzed-out '60s garage punk from Sweden (I think).



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Serious fun going on here. I picture sweaty dudes in suits losin' it on stage and getting plenty of action afterwards. More, please! —Ty Stranglehold (Ken Rock)

ULTRA VIOLENCE: *Brick Rain*: CD

Ultra Violence was a N.Y. hardcore band whose initial output was peppered across nearly every one of Big City's '80s compilations their first time 'round. Nothing wrong with that at all, as some of the best bands from that period never got past "compilation band" status, but now they've managed to release their first proper album some twenty-nine years after they first stomped terra. What you get here are ten new (circa-2009) recordings of older tunes that sound like they could've easily been recorded back in the band's heyday. Tacked on after the recent recordings are their original recordings from the 1980s, all in their original states of dubious sound quality, which will no doubt offend the sensibilities of the kids who've grown up in the ProTools and CD world, but will give older folks a moment to pause and reflect on what measures bands would go to just to be heard back when the term "punk" didn't come with a copyright symbol and a sponsor's logo next to it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Welfare)

UNHOLY GRAVE: *Grind Hell*: 10"

Unholy Grave are one of those grind bands like Godstomper or Agathocles that have about twelve million records because they've been around forever

and will put out a record with just about anybody. This 10" is the latest in a long string of releases dating back to the early '90s and is just a live set. The quality of the recording isn't the best I've ever heard, but it doesn't matter because you can still pick out the few instances of melodic guitar riffs thrown into the mix. All the songs are great as usual, with "Overprotected Law" being a standout. Unholy Grave are easier to listen to than a lot of straight grind bands because they have more mid-tempo heavy stuff and even some hints of melody, so it's not just a constant blur of thrashing. As a result, the songs are easy to distinguish and they stick with you more. A few of these can actually get stuck in your head. The artwork is great and the print job for the sleeve and jacket are top notch. Severely limited release, but definitely worth hunting down for you international grind freaks. —Ian Wise (Death Agonies And Screams)

VACCINES: *Self-titled*: LP

Fourteen tracks of scuzzy self-destruction punk, two of which are Gang Green and Mummies covers, from a Seattle band that has roots in the '80s Sacramento punk scene, if the accompanying booklet is to be believed. They know their style well and it shows throughout on songs like "Git Fucked Up," "Legalize Murder," "Ballad of Faggoty Anne," and "Chemical Drain." —Jimmy Alvarado (Wolf Dog)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Coffee Stains and Cigarette Burns*: CD

I think I just got mind fucked. This starts off on a blues kick. And it continues on as such. I'm digging it. It sets the tone to make me feel like I'm in a coffee shop somewhere in the Midwest, east of Chicago. It's a good place to be. The energy gets taken up a notch with a rockabilly-ish band that kind of sounds like if Pretty Boy Thorson was actually just a skinny, angry nerd (basically, me). I've heard of coffee shops having shows in the later hours, so it still fits. Then it suddenly goes to noisy, bordering on nü-metal. That's where I'm thrown. I like the first half of this, because, apparently, I hate punk rock. —Joe Evans III (Chain Smoking)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Do You Hear We? By All Means*: LP

Eight bands contributing two songs each of straight up Chattanooga punk rock. You get the more widely known outfits such as Future Virgins, ADD/C, and Hidden Spots as well as some lesser known gems like What If..., True Stereo, and more. There aren't many cities that could pull this off this well, or many labels who it makes as much sense for as Do You Hear We? While outside of the city's limits, Chattanooga might have a sort a cult following, it's a pretty rabid cult, and if you like your punk with a little grime around the ears, Chattanooga has the sound. Incestuous? Definitely. Myopic? At times, but who am I to judge. Pure DIY punk rock? Without a doubt. —Daryl (Do You Hear We?)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Is it Broke Yet? LP*

A collection of indie punk bands from different parts of the country, though the lion's share call Washington state and California home. A lotta diverse sounds coming from No High Fives To Bullshit, Atlas, Can Of Beans, The Damage Done, The Mark Sparkles, Stoned At Heart, Memoirs And Landmines, Young Generals, The Kobanes, Touch Me Satan, Why I Hate, and The Last Chucks. Can't say I dug all of it, but I liked that it sounded like a bona fide compilation rather than yet another bullshit label sampler. —Jimmy Alvarado (Abandon Hope)

VILE GASH: *Self-titled*: 7"

This is a solid ten-song vinyl debut for Vile Gash. It's a relentless, gritty, and raw barrage of '80s-styled hardcore with all the intensity and audacity of the first Negative Approach 7". The band uses feedback to blend the songs together, which is motif a lot of bands are doing right now, but it sounds good on this one because they don't turn the feedback into a focal point until the stops in the song "Incapable" where they let it ring out like an old Floor record. Other highlights include "Mind in Chains" and the ten-second "Who Are You Today?" The first pressing sold out immediately (as per the usual Youth Attack routine), but I think the repress is available now in stores and distros. —Ian Wise (Youth Attack)

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VOLXSTURM / HARRINGTON SAINTS:
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Split: 7"

Another good split single from Longshot (and Contra Records in Germany). Volxsturm are from Germany, and—I've said it before—the German language just may be my favorite tongue to hear punk rock in. It just sounds cool. Harrington Saints are a little faster and sound good here, too. I don't usually get down with the "lace up your boots and hit the streets" kind of lyrics, but the tunes are rockin'. Nice looking record, too. —Ty Stranglehold (Longshot)

WALLS: Staring at the Walls: 7"

What we have here is a superb example of what present day hardcore ought to be: a sum of a band's counterparts, where every component is just as crucial and key in the process of creating such vile yet endearing sounds. Walls are the kind of band whose members magnify each other's presence instead of outshining either the instrumentation or the vocals. I was witness to this: they are fucking wrecking balls live. And the great part about this record is that the madness captured onto vinyl is just as intense as seeing them in person. Yeah, I heard Rorschach got back together and did some live shows. Walls are what Rorschach would have sounded like if they had decided to take it to the next level. —Juan Espinosa (Iron Lung)

WANKYS, THE / LOTUS Fucker:
Split: EP

Two bands of different weights. One light, the other heavy. The Wankys (ex-early Extreme Noise Terror and Varukers) are blown-out noise similar to early Disorder, Satanic Malfunxions, and Chaotic Dischord. Feedback, minimal drumming, and a vocalist who spews the words out fast and sort of growly. If you like noisecore, then you'd probably like these guys. Doesn't do much for me. There's no low end, and it just goes by without incident. Too light. Lotus Fucker, on the other hand, steal the show. They have a definite heaviness in their sound, while still being (semi) fast and noisy. Two songs that go by in a blink of the eye. Would like to hear more from Lotus Fucker. —M.Avr (Katorga Works, katorgaworks@gmail.com)

WHITE FLAG DOWN:

Malcontent Killing Machine: CD-R

White Flag Down? Didn't I just see a White Flag reunion show? Kidding aside, this corny band of fashion punks and skins from L.A. is precisely what my simpleton ass craves. While most listeners probably will start rolling their eyes at the intro sample from *A Clockwork Orange*, I got all excited. Reminiscent of mainline street punk in the vein of Lower Class Brats, there's a well-studied balance of old and new here that gets me giddy. Coop, the singer, is forty and you have to respect him for not giving up on old

school punk imagery and style. Plus, his voice is weathered, distinctive, and all around killer. I heartily recommend these guys. —Art Ettinger (Safety Pin, myspace.com/13spr13)

WHITE LOAD: My Wall: EP

I feel like a complete dildó for passing up their debut EP when it came through here a while back. I found it sandwiched in with a bunch of garage and pop punk records. So, being the nub I can be, I thought these guys were more of the same. Fucking hell, was I completely wrong. I need to stop being a nub, really. White Load are A-fucking-one prime hardcore with a raw and trashy approach. Providence, RI must be proud of these fellers. I would be. You get three quick and scalding blasts of music here that separates the lifers from the part timers. The title track is thrashy and trashy, stop/go and chaotic. The levels are certainly in the red on this recording. Distortion permeates every thing. The second side is the same: distortion, blown out with white noise swirling in the current. The singer sounds like he's had a few days of no sleep, stuck in a hot box, and the lights are always on. Unhinged and falling into the abyss. There are only three hundred of these records on the planet. I suggest you get one as soon as humanly possible. I'm taking mine to the grave. —M.Avr (Ken 75, kenplastic@hotmail.com)

WHITE WIRES, THE: Self-titled: LP

Despite the arty cover with three bodies with heads replaced with

assorted types of plugs, the music here dances on the line between simplistic punk, garage rock, and '60s pop. I wanna say they remind me a little of Masters Of The Obvious, but maybe with not quite as much "punk" mixed in. —Jimmy Alvarado (Douchemaster)

WILD AMERICA: The Sea: 7"

If you're expecting Party Garbage you will be sadly disappointed, but if you're looking for passionate introspection to the soundtrack of "mellowdic" punk melancholy, than this is all you. Imagine college rock in the dirty Austin, TX punk scene playing dirty house shows. I remember seeing them live and picking up their demo last year and it wasn't as toned down, but the end result is pleasant with a slightly deranged subtlety to it. —Daryl (Freedom School)

WILD THING: Age Difference: EP

Well, well, well... a punk band from San Francisco that is actually worth a shit. Not that Los Angeles can boast anything of the sort, because this city is certainly in the dumper when it comes to punk bands these days. I may be jaded, but I'm no fool. I just happen to know good from bad, substance from hype. Wild Thing are definitely drinking from the well of punk rock past, but they do it well, and it sounds legit, and not some "phone it in and let's get out of here" type deal. The guitars have a jangly sound, the drums sound like they were recording on phone books (a plus when it comes



This double LP (+ CD) in gatefold sleeve is Stardumb's 50th release and includes 14 Stardumb related bands who recorded a new song for the first LP as well as a cover of a song Stardumb previously released for the second LP. This results in some really nice and surprising covers, like the **Peawees** from Italy who make the **Groovie Ghoulies'** *Running With Bigfoot* sound like a Bo Diddley tune and **Kepi Ghoulie & Jerry Hormone** covering Dutch garage rockers the **Stiletos**. Other artists on the record are **The Apers**, **Accelerators**, **Manges**, **Sonic Dolls**, **Zatopeks**, **Popsters**, **Brandon Tussey** and more! A CD featuring all 28 songs from both LP's is included. Out Oct. 15th!

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to bands like this), and the vocals are a bit snotty, but not overdone. It's like the singer (Brace from Warkrime) knows he can't really sing, but it's not like he gives a shit in the first place. It works here. "(Now I Wanna Die in a) Nuclear War" is the most manic of the three, while the title track and "I'm Smoking (Leave Me Alone)" are mid tempo and catchy. Record buyer, proceed accordingly. -M.Avrq (Daggerman, daggermanrecords.com)

WORKHORSE III, THE: Self-titled: CD
Female-fronted riff rock. Tunes are well crafted and well played. -Jimmy Alvarado (DRP)

WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY: Vox Inferne: 7"

I am a huge World/Inferno fan, so when I saw there was some new material following 2007's *Addicted to Bad Ideas* I was stoked, even if it was only three songs. This is a bit of an oddity though, even for such a weird band as the multi-member cabaret punk collective that is World Inferno. This single is composed of the three a cappella songs done in multi-part harmony by the band back in 2006 that were never released until now. One of the songs, "Paul Robeson," has been recorded at least twice before by the full band, and the other two songs "The Devil Boy's Last Hurrah," and "Istanbul, Drowned Blue Shoes" appear to be unique to this release. The songs are deftly done and a lot better sounding

than, say, Jub Jub, but these feel more like pleasant oddities rather than really essential pieces of the bands discography. Still, it is nice to have more material from the band in some form. -Adrian (Team Science, teamsciencerecords@gmail.com)

WOVEN BONES: In and out and Back Again: LP

Lo-fi garage rock with a droney, sleepy, dreamy side. Sort of reminds me of Suicide, Wet Hair, but instead of synthesizers, Woven Bones use guitars that have a dirty fuzz. Admittedly, this took me a few listens before I could get into it. It's one of those records that reveals itself to you as long as you meet it in the middle. Gotta give if you wanna get, I suppose. "If It Feels Alright" and "Creepy Bone" are immediate attention grabbers and "Blind Conscience" is a nice way to close the album off. It's a steady-going tune that's sleepy in a good way. Shoegazer-like, without the dense wall of distortion, and in place of the soft vocals there's a nasally snarl. But it all works. There are some songs that have a fast pace, but, on the whole, this is one of those albums you put on, go sit on the couch, and stare at the ceiling fan, thinking about how the light and shadows create optical illusions, such as the fan reversing direction for a few seconds. -M.Avrq (Hozac, hozacrecords.com)

YEAR ZERO: Year One: CD
Clean yet dirty. Completely put together, but scuffed. Shiny but

"imperfect." Melodic, but not future-insulin-injections sweet. Tough, but not street fight tough. Twisted cords in a thick rope tough that can hold a lot of weight tough. Year Zero's from Ottawa. They've somehow fused stuff that usually doesn't go well together, that actually sounds a little shitty when I'm writing it out: The Carbonas with Pennywise. Marked Men with early Good Riddance. It's a strange alchemy of high-end-sounding production with fangs, anthemy parts, and spikes rolling along on the chassis of prime, searing garage rock hookery. If I wasn't listening to it right now, I wouldn't believe it myself. But isn't that the point of great new music? To be a little confounded, yet excited? To set new expectations? To let the magic just come even if it doesn't make a lick of "music logic" sense? I have no idea how they pull this off without it being absolute poo. It's gold, though. Surprise of the issue for me. Highly recommended. -Todd (Young Modern)

YOUNG OFFENDERS: Leader of the Followers: 12"

You know what sounds like fun? A pop punk band that uses a lot of harmonized singing. It's like they are ripping through their own song, bopping up and down, and all screaming together because they love what they are doing so much. No pretension, nothing forced, just a bunch of musicians who love playing in a band. Okay, I suppose some

douche-punk bands do this too. But you can feel honest enthusiasm in the Young Offenders, just bursting through a song staring at each other, going, "Fuckyeah, isn't this fun?! Holy shit!" The Young O's got real tight control with their peppy anthems, getting into some great themes, singing smart lyrics, and then getting out the door. Feels like some of the better quickpop bands from the '80s that had something to say and loved doing it. -Speedway Randy (Deranged)

ZEBRASSIERES: Goopy Zoo: 12"

As happens on occasion, this review will seem somewhat biased because friends of mine are in this band... and I mastered the record... but I believe I can remain objective. My objectivity becomes even more suspect since this record is FUCKING AWESOME. Seriously, this is some incredibly catchy pop in the vein of Devo-meets-Ramones-meets a bunch of garage bands I've never heard. Insanely memorable keyboard lines and vocal melodies that invade your brain for weeks. This isn't even really my type of thing, but it's quite obviously a cut above most of the bands that'd have "organ-driven" or "keyboard-fuelled" in their write-ups. Beautiful layout, too. Definitely recommended. -Dave Williams (Going Gaga)

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"EXIT 6" - S.C.C.
Waiting outside in a parked car
I-65. Ardmore, Tennessee
Wishing like hell, I was finally 18
I crack open my last warm beer
Exit 6 waits for me
Exit 6 when I turn 18
Neon dances across the dash
I hear screaming as the music pounds
One more hour until midnight
Damn I need to take a fucking piss
Exit 6 waits for me
Exit 6 when I turn 18
I hear my brother yell my name
Finally, it's time for us to go
I'm finally 18 my day has come
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- **45 RPM**, PO Box 282, San Pedro, CA 90733
- **Abandon Hope**, 1717 Burwell St., Bremerton, WA 98337
- **An Historic**, 124 Mansfield St., New Haven, CT 06511
- **Arctic Flowers** c/o Mike Warm, 4934 N Vancouver Ave., Portland, OR 97217
- **Artifix**, PO Box 641, Moreno Valley, CA 92556
- **Asian Man**, PO Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030
- **Babyshaker**, 1716 Thomas Ave. 32, Charlotte, NC 28205
- **Bachelor**, 5421 Adnet 186, Austria
- **Bad American**, 852 Clewell St., Bethlehem, PA 18015
- **Bad Idea**, PO Box 6052, Huntington Beach, CA 92615
- **Beer City**, PO Box 26035, Milwaukee, WI 53226-0035
- **Black100s**, PO Box 190, Ridgewood, NJ 07451
- **Bullit**, 935 Caledonia Ave., Victoria BC V8T-1E7, Canada
- **Burger**, 645 S. State College Blvd., Fullerton, CA 92831
- **Chain Smoking**, PO Box 13756, Fort Wayne, IN 46865
- **Cowabunga**, 311 Stearn Dr., Genoa, IL 60135
- **Daggerman**, 57 Sycamore St., SE, CA 94110
- **DC-Jam**, 2733 E. Battlefield Rd., #164, Springfield, MO 65804
- **Death Agonies And Screams**, PO Box 19555, Asheville, NC 28815
- **Deep Six**, PO Box 6911, Burbank, CA 91510
- **Deranged**, 2700 Lower Rd., Roberts Creek, BC, V0N 2W4, Canada

- **Despite All This**, PO Box 513, Thessalon ON, P0R 1L0, Canada
- **Dirt Cult**, 713 Stagecoach Dr., Las Cruces, NM 88011
- **Do The Dog**, 65 Blackdown Way, Thatcham, Berkshire, RG19 3FY, England
- **Do Ya Hear We?**, PO Box 6037, Chattanooga, TN 37401
- **Don Giovanni**, PO Box 628, Kingston, NJ 08528
- **DRP**, PO Box 6527, Wyomissing, PA 19610
- **Eugene**, PO Box 1002, Lexington, KY 40588
- **Fat**, PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119
- **Feel It**, 4630 Mill Run Ln., Earlsville, CA 22936
- **Fistolo**, PO Box 2836, Upper Darby, PA 19082
- **Flat Black**, 6191 Santa Catalina, Garden Grove, CA 92845
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- **Ggnzla**, 315 10th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122
- **Going Gaga**, 301-322 Frank St. Ottawa, ON, K2P 0X8, Canada
- **Going Underground**, 1822 G. St., Bakersfield, CA 93301
- **Grave Mistake**, PO Box 12482, Richmond, VA 23241
- **Halo Of Flies**, c/o Cory Von Bohlen, 3444 N. Bremen St., Milwaukee, WI 53212
- **Homesick**, 8385 S. Maple Court, Zeeland, MI 49464
- **Houseplant**, PO Box 3382, Bloomington, IN 47402
- **HS!BF**, 512 E. Center St., Milwaukee WI 53212
- **Impedance**, Post Schomburgstr. 80, D-22767 Hamburg, Germany
- **Indianola**, 4752 San Saba Dr., Valdosta, GA 31632
- **Insane Society**, PO Box 18, 50401 Nov Bydov, Czech Republic

- **Insurgence**, 33 Hazelton Ave. Suite 18, Toronto, Ont., Canada, M5R 2E3
- **Intellect**, c/o Jeremy Zierau, 345 Eldert St., Apt. 217, Brooklyn, NY 11237
- **Iron Lung**, PO Box 95521, Seattle WA 98145
- **Ken Rock**, Karl Johans Gatan 92 Göteborg, Västra Götaland, Sweden 41455
- **Kiss Of Death**, PO Box 75550, Tampa, FL 33675
- **Knock Knock**, 200-1 Springmeadow Dr., Holbrook, NY 11741
- **Koi**, 510 Wilcrest Dr., Houston, TX 77042
- **Let's Pretend**, PO Box 1663, Bloomington, IN 47402
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- **Muy Autentico**, 4107 University Ave., Riverside, CA 92501
- **MVD Audio**, PO Box 280, Oaks, PA 19456
- **Mylene Sheath**, PO Box 12029, Covington, KY 41012
- **Neptoon**, 3561 Main St., Vancouver, BC V5V 3N4, Canada
- **Nikt Nic Nie Wie**, PO Box 53, 34-400 Nowy Targ, Poland
- **No Breaks**, 184 Rogers St. NE, Suite #301, Atlanta, GA 30317
- **No Idea**, PO Box 14636, Gainesville, FL 32604-4636
- **Not Very Nice**, PO Box 2, Bloomfield Hills, MI 48303-0002
- **Odessa**, PO Box 1301, Carrboro, NC 27510

- **Orange Twin**, 255 Noketchee Creek Rd., Athens, GA 30601
- **P. Trash**, c/o Peter Eichorn, Augustastraße 4, 33649 Bielefeld, Germany
- **Papagajuv Hlasatel**, c/o Pavel Friml, Mrstikova 393, Ricany u Brna 664 82, Czech Republic
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- **Plan-It-X**, c/o The Ace Of Cups, 1007 Washington Ave., Cairo, IL 62914
- **Profane Existence**, PO Box 18051, MPLS, MN 55418
- **Rebel Sound**, 146-A North St., Pittsfield, MA 01201
- **Pecess**, PO Box 1666, San Pedro, CA 90733
- **Red Scare**, PO Box 13285, Chicago, IL 60613
- **Robotic Empire**, PO Box 1741, Olympia, WA 98507
- **Shattered Debauchee**, PO Box 59643, London, SE22 2AP, England
- **Smog Veil**, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #284, Chicago, IL 60647
- **SP**, 2-54-2 Itabashi, Itabashi-ku, Tokyo 1730004, Japan
- **Stomp**, 78 Rachel East, Montréal, Quebec H2W 1C6, Canada
- **Sudden Death**, Cascades PO Box 43001, Burnaby BC Canada V5G 3H0
- **Telephone Explosion**, 1077 Dundas St. W., Toronto, ON M6J 1W9, Canada
- **Toxic Shock**, PO Box 2091, Tucson, AZ 85702
- **Traffic Street**, 1114 F St. NE #308, Washington, DC 20002-5392
- **Wallride**, 4401 Ethel Ave., Hampstead, MD 21074
- **Warm Bath**, PO Box 652, Buffalo, NY 14215
- **Weird Skull**, RR2 Box 2275A, Saylorsburg, PA 18353
- **Welfare**, 58 River St., Haverhill, MA 01832
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ZINE REVIEWS

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"The first Kermit
was made out of
halves of ping
pong balls and
Henson's mother's
coat."

—Lisa Weiss
STITCHING TOGETHER

ABORT! #22, \$3, 5 1/2" x 8 1/2",
photocopied, 60 pgs.

First off, let me say that *Abort!* has done twenty-two issues, is well known, and is pretty acclaimed in the zine world. So it's obviously doing something for a lot of folks. That said, I fucking hate this zine. It's pretentious, wordy, and has pseudo-intellectual detail that's overbearing to John Updike proportions, using stream-of-consciousness-style writing that has been irrelevant since Henry Miller kicked the bucket. "You-just-don't-get-it-man" stories that go nowhere. —Craven Rock (Jonathon Spies, 45 E 7th St., NY, NY 10003)

BACHELOR PAD MAGAZINE #11
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", printed,
no price listed, 48 pgs.

Here is a magazine that has absolutely nothing in common with punk rock. Maybe the advertisements for tattoos can be seen as "punkish," but that's about it. There are a lot of pictures featuring burlesque dancers and scantily clad pinup girls—but that's no different than anything featured in *Playboy* magazine. There are even comics that look like they were right out of the pages of *Playboy*. One depicts a woman sitting on a man's lap, admiring a huge diamond ring, where she says, "You're so right. Size does matter." *Bachelor Pad* celebrates an era that I wish was dead—the faux Hawaiian tiki carvings, the faux Hawaiian cocktails, and women dressed as though they're living in the Eisenhower era being sold as a "smooth" lifestyle. This reminds me of my parents' old *National Geographic* magazines, which featured ads for cigarettes boasting of "full-flavored tar." It sure sounds good, the pictures make them look like they are having a great time, but it's all bullshit. —Steve Hart (Java@bachelorpadmagazine.net)

CORPORATE ROCK KNOCKOUT
#0, 8 1/2" x 11", printed,
no price listed, 72 pgs.

This is the first issue of this German fanzine. Some of the articles and reviews are in German; some are in English. Interviews with the New

Bomb Turks, No Bunny, Ghetto Ways, Tina Luchessi, and the Sedatives (plus a lot more), along with some record reviews. The focus of the zine is on high energy garage rock bands—a genre that I'm not entirely familiar with—so I found a few new bands to look for in my never-ending quest for good music. The article on New Orleans and the European tour food guide were well done. I found myself referring to the food guide once or twice before visiting a German restaurant here on Maui. —Steve Hart (CRKO Fanzine, c/o Bernd Fisher, Am Hamburg 40, 49716, Meppen, Germany)

C-U CONFIDENTIAL #4, 5 1/2" x
11 1/2", printed, \$3, 40 pgs.

A magazine featuring the movies of Champaign, Urbana, and the Cities Beyond? Right on! I spent a year and a half in Illinois in the early '80s and would've loved to have something like this to read—along with the possibility of an indie-film scene in Champaign. I didn't even know of such an entity. Nevertheless, this features movie news from the area, interviews with filmmakers, and an article on the movie, *Finding Virginia*. —Steve Hart (Paper Opterex, PO Box 45, Champaign, IL 61824-0045).

**CURIOUS CASE OF THE
COMMUNIST JELL-O BOX:
THE EXECUTION OF JULIUS &
ETHEL ROSENBERG, THE**, \$2, 26"
x 21", glossy poster zine, double sided.

This comes all folded up to look like a zine, but when unfolded, it's a double-sided poster. It's a sneaky way to get your poster reviewed as a zine. The poster is about the Rosenbergs, who were accused of being Russian spies during the Red Scare of the 1950s. The part that I don't remember from middle school history class is that the only piece of evidence used to convict them was a Jell-O box that they may or may not have been used to identify themselves to another subversive. The specifics of the trial are printed on the poster, but, needless to say, it was a flimsy case that serves as an example of the anti-communist

paranoia from that era. The poster itself has newspaper clippings about the case, declassified documents, and the authors' explanatory paragraphs, all cut-and-pasted together in a black/ white/ red/ blue color scheme. It's a well-done tribute to the deserving couple. —Lauren Trout (Microcosmpublishing.com)

**HOW TO MAKE SOAP WITHOUT
BURNING YOUR FACE OFF**, \$2, 8
1/2" x 5 1/2", offset, 12 pgs.

I've never considered soap making before, but I had to like this zine right off the bat just because of the title. I figured, if the author cares enough about not permanently disfiguring me, then I care enough to read her zine. Plus, now that I know that soap making is like some kind of dangerous science experiment, I definitely want to know more. Appropriately, the instructions for making soap start off with a warning about using lye (the main substance for making soap; also a very caustic and poisonous substance). Then the author proceeds to explain the soap making process: there's a chart to help you choose what other ingredients to use, the recipe, and "special tricks" like using color and additives. It's all very neatly handwritten, I might add. Definitely a worthy topic, covered with a great amount of detail in a way that is easy to understand. An excellent example for the entire "how-to" genre of zines. —Lauren Trout (Microcosmpublishing.com)

LOSERS WEEPERS #1, 7" x 7",
printed, \$5, 44 pgs.

I really enjoyed reading this. There are three short stories in this "Tragicomic." One employs a few unedited and disturbing journal pages, found by the author, who then creates a fictional story written around the events described in the journal. The second comic revolves around a "poem," written on an envelope that was found outside in NYC. It's graphic and crude, but the comic is well-drawn and funny. The third and last comic takes its inspiration

from a napkin found in Tompkins Square Park. It's a short story, but very poignant and sad. This was really fun to read. —Steve Hart (info@birdcagebottombooks.com)

MAP OF FOG #2, \$2,
5 1/2" x 8 1/2", photocopied, 26 pgs.

A zine centered around San Francisco, in which the author reports on going to a Dungeons & Dragons group, one he found by looking around on the internet. Then he covers his experience at SF's Critical Mass and comes away disappointed by the smug and confrontational manner of the bike protesters. This was a letdown, because I've always felt that way at those things, but from what I'd heard, the one in San Francisco was more down-to-earth and less self righteous. He writes a "tales of the city"-style story about an interaction he observed on the bus. Then he takes us on a tour through the Sunset District. With text and photography, he shows us the houses that have been turned into art projects by their quirky owners. Besides all this, there are interviews and write-ups on some of the local color. —Craven Rock (Marcos Soriano, PO Box 27252, SF, CA 94127)

MYLENE ZINE, THE, VOL. 2 #2, \$2,
5" x 8", glossy cover and content, ? pgs.

This zine is a vehicle for the record label, The Mylene Sheath. Nothing wrong with that as many record labels started as zines (Touch & Go, Second Nature, etc.) The content is slightly interesting; I enjoyed the interviews with label art director Nate Shumaker and Matt Jones from Pirates Press. I only really cared about the interview with Shumaker because I used to love his old hardcore band, Everdown. Jones's interview was actually pretty informative about what goes into making vinyl records. The rest of the zine isn't that interesting; an excessive amount of poetry seems to drag down the quality. A couple of short stories, some artist interviews, and a few comics round things out. —Kurt Morris (The Mylene Zine, PO Box 12029, Covington, KY 41012)

RITSHAG #8, donations, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, 32 pgs. I agree with one thing above all else in this magazine: Much like the writer, "I Can't Go for That" by Hall and Oates, is a song I must control my urge to dance to every time it comes on. And I am not a pretty dancer. I enjoyed the review section very much, because I had actually heard of most of the releases being reviewed as they are the type of bands *Razorcake* typically covers. Heck, there is even a review of a back issue of *Razorcake*. I was excited for the imaginary mix tape, but that was the only part of the zine that let me down. —Noah WK (Ritshag c/o Matt Filyk, PO Box 22078 Brandon, MB R7A 6Y9, Canada)

SCAM #7, \$3, 5½" x 8½", photocopied with letterpress cover, 64 pgs. Miami always conjures up images of white sport coats, cocaine, and an airport full of rude Latin American nouveau riche on their way to

is one of the best foods in the world? Pizza. Duh! So, basically, this dude goes to different pizza parlors in New York City and writes about his overall experience. And if you are familiar with NYC, you know that there is a pizza shop almost everywhere you look. This will help you in the future to pick the correct one to maximize your pizza munching experience. I can't decide what my favorite part of this zine is. It is either the front or back cover. The front cover is a classic Ramones-esque photo, but the three people pictured have a slice of pizza for a head. The back cover is a *Daily News* article about our writer and his feat. Read this zine, eat some pie, and live. —Noah WK (Slice Harvester, 442D Lorimer St. #230 Brooklyn, NY 11206, Sliceharvester@gmail.com)

STANDARD ISSUE #10, \$3, 8 ½" x 11", newsprint Lots of zines will provide you with information about bands and their

Did you know that the first Kermit was made out of halves of ping pong balls and Henson's mother's coat? It also includes a bio of Dr. Bunsen Honeydew, the *Stitching Together* author Ed Choy Moorman did in art school. It is well drawn (meh, what do I know? It's pretty). There is a nice alternative layout about a pilgrimage to Henson's boyhood home in Leyland, Mississippi. If the Muppets had an impact on your life at all, this one's a must. —Lisa Weiss (edchoymoorman@gmail.com)

TOM TOM #3, \$30/four issue sub, 8" x 10 ½" glossy, 42 pgs. One day, there won't have to be a magazine for female drummers. I have enough friends who play music and are girls who say they aren't taken seriously, and they are not whiners. But until that day, there is *Tom Tom*. It celebrates chicks with sticks who play all kinds of music, from *Razorcake* darling Jen Shag to cover girl Cindy

my interest enough and is well written so, as its name slightly hints at, it is best used as quick toilet reading. For me, the most enjoyable part of this were the quotes printed on the side of each page, which are so good they make the zine worth it for those alone. One of my favorites was, "I'm sinning in my pants right now." Pure gold. —Noah WK (Urinal Gum, PO Box 1243 Eugene, OR 97440)

WET CEMENT #0, \$2, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, 19 pgs. It is rare these days to find a cool new zine that you absolutely enjoy and look forward to new issues from. However, *Wet Cement* is one of those. Everything about it is downright awesome, from the cut and paste illustrations and "columns" and layout, to the review section, and onto the bottom and top ten lists of the past ten years. I had an easy time relating to and understanding the stories and the talk of obscure bands that only a

"If the author cares enough about not permanently disfiguring me, then I care enough to read her zine."

—Lauren Trout *HOW TO MAKE SOAP WITHOUT BURNING YOUR FACE OFF*

Disney World. Social justice was not the first thing to come to my mind when I picked up *Scam* #7, *The Return to Miami*. Since 2002, it has been home to Art Basel, an event for rich people power-shopping for art. Since 2008, it has been one of the cities most affected by the housing bubble's burst, with one of the highest percentages of empty condos—no white blazers in the closet and no cocaine on the coffee table. A movement called Take Back the Land attempted to move the homeless into these places. This issue contains a reprint of author Erick Lyle's coverage of Art Basel for the *Miami New Times*, expanded with some of the stuff his editors cut out. At the same time, Take Back the Land was meeting with a lot of resistance, which Lyle documents. It is a professionally written, interesting read on a subject pretty much ignored outside of Miami that could be a lesson for other cities. It is thick and densely laid out. Most of it is word processed but parts are handwritten by someone without neat writing, which bugs me. The cover is letter pressed, which I love. —Lisa Weiss (available from Last Gasp, Microcosm, Needles and Pens)

SLICE HARVESTER #1, \$3, 5½" x 8½", photocopied, 34 pgs. This magazine is brilliant. The basic idea of it is so perfect and useful. What

tours, but what about an A-W listing of new diseases you can catch while on tour, watching a touring band, or an amazing amount of ailments that have their origins in the bathroom? Also included are interviews with Mean Jeans, Indian Wars!, and artist Dirty Donny. There is also a column relating the life of an operating room orderly and instructions on how to shrink heads, should that ever become necessary. The layout is clean and easy to read. —Lisa Weiss (PO Box 87002, Ottawa, ON, K2P 1X0 Canada)

STITCHING TOGETHER, \$3, 5½" x 8½", offset, 16 pgs. I don't usually review comics—I don't read many and I don't feel qualified. But because the cover of this one features a lovingly hand-drawn portrait of one of my heroes, Kermit The Frog, I had to fish it out of the review bin. *The Muppet Show* was something my parents and I watched as a family before cancer made my family smaller. My lawyer mom and C.P.A. dad laughed as hard as I did. Kids at school used to tease me for being tall but none of the Muppets were normal. The glamorous human guest stars were just fine with Gonzo's beak and Miss Piggy's curves. Lots of people have stories like mine and some are included in this comic, which tells the life story of Muppets and *Sesame Street* creator Jim Henson.

Black, who played with Lenny Kravitz for eleven years. There is a lot of stuff to interest non-musicians and plenty of technical articles, as well as a look at small manufacturer District Drum Co. and industry giant Zildjian. The fashion content, which was a complaint with the previous issue, is almost nonexistent. —Lisa Weiss (tomtommag.com)

TRAINWRECK #8, \$2/2 stamps, ¼ page, photocopied, 48 pgs. I like Dave. He's a thinker. And while he's still vulnerable to the easy trappings of writing punk zines, he's able to take a step back and recognize the bullshit, which there is a lot of. A. Lot. In the newest issue of *Trainwreck*, he embarks on a case study of punk rock by analyzing the vices of your typical cliché DIY punk rocker. Vices like: nostalgia, white lies, record collecting, etc. It's entertaining, and in the most constructive ways it's very personal. It's extremely easy to be young and dumb, but that's why I'm always excited to see a new issue of *Trainwreck*, 'cause while it might be chock full of young and dumb, I find comfort and entertainment in it, it's written well, and it's interesting. —Daryl (Dave Brainwreck, 74 Dwight St. #2, New Haven, CT 06811)

URINAL GUM #9, \$2, 4¼" x 5½", photocopied, 42 pgs. The content inside of the zine holds

select and privileged few of us listen to. I just want more, more, more. —Noah WK (Jeff, 56 Franklin St., Allston, MA 02134)

XEROGRAPHY DEBT #26, \$3, screened and printed, 51 pgs. Considering I've spent the past five years reviewing things, interviewing assorted people, and recently put out my own homemade collection of such in addition to some attempts at fiction years ago, it's kind of crazy for me to say I'm into zines on a casual basis. They're the kind of thing I just like to come across naturally, instead of constantly searching out, with a blind faith that I'll stumble upon some stuff I find interesting every now and then. The people at *Xerography Debt* are very much *not* that kind of people, as this is pretty much all zine reviews, columns about zines, as well as other general "beginner stuff you should know" advice. Admittedly, I often find stuff like this a little too overbearing for my taste (though, I kill time at Penn Station by walking to the book store next door and obsessively reading the same book on sitcoms over and over, so I'm a bit of a hypocrite), but it's a neat little resource for the hardcore zine types. —Joe Evans III (Davida Gypsy Breier, PO Box 11064, Baltimore, MD 21212, Davida@leekinginc.com)

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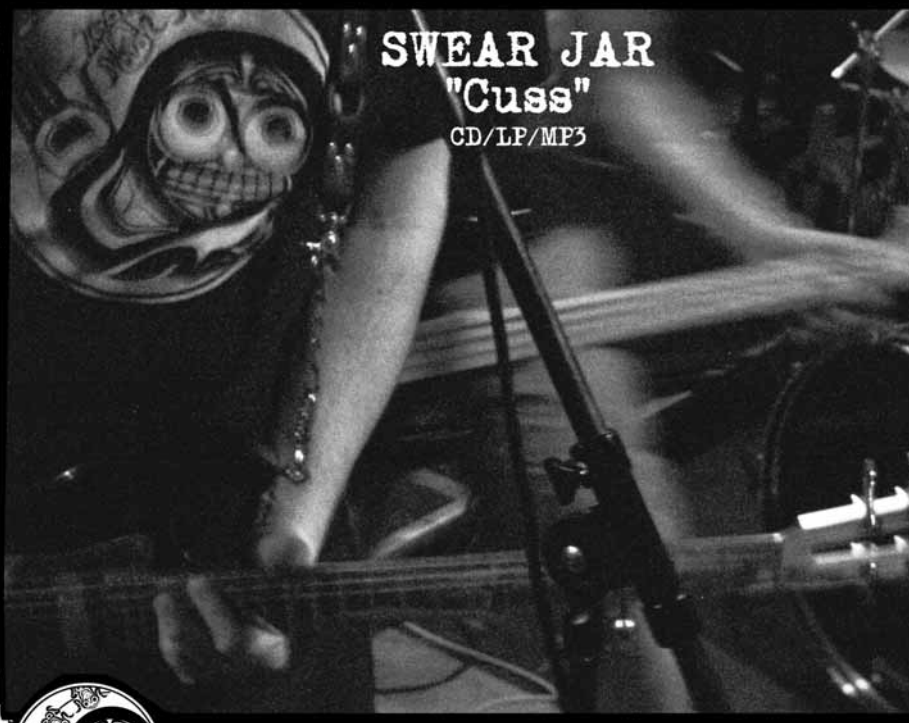
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BOOK REVIEWS



Argh Fuck Kill: The Story of the Dayglo Abortions

By Chris Walter, 249 pgs.

Starting with frontman Murray “The Cretin” Acton punching a nun in kindergarten, this is an exhaustive history of the forces that shaped this “Proud to Be a Canadian” band. Every gig and tour glitch is documented, from their beginnings in the unlikely town of Victoria, BC in 1980, up through a tour in 2009 with only one original member. Their story is not terribly remarkable or that much different from other bands of that era, except for the obscenity trial. The most interesting part of the book comes

“The Dayglos’ defense attorney brought in all kinds of academic expert witnesses who testified that while songs about taking hamsters rectally may be offensive, they are not meant to be sexually exciting and are therefore not obscene.” —Lisa Weiss, *Argh Fuck Kill: The Story of the Dayglo Abortions*

when the band was dragged through the Canadian courts for their albums *Here Today*, *Guano Tomorrow* and *Feed Us a Fetus* a few years after the Dead Kennedys’ *Frankenchrist* ordeal. The Dayglos’ defense attorney brought in all kinds of academic expert witnesses who testified that while songs about taking hamsters rectally may be offensive, they are not meant to be sexually exciting and are therefore not obscene. It is a good peek back into a time when it took considerable effort to put out a record, throw a show or book a tour; when punk rock used to scare people. The Dayglos themselves might have scared people with the amount of drugs they did. The book is well researched but the writing style is kind of awkward: The author makes jokes that might work in conversation but don’t really make the transition to print. —Lisa Weiss (punkbooks.com)

Bloodreal

By Crazy Carl Robinson 261 pgs.

Far be it for me to insult the writing of someone named Crazy Carl Robinson, especially in the event that it’s not just a funny nickname. I wouldn’t want to start getting bags of toenail clippings in the mail because of a negative review. However, to the contrary, I found this book to be perversely entertaining. It’s like I’m reading the private thoughts of a fat, sad loser and I mean that in the nicest way possible, as I’m pretty sure those were the author’s intentions anyway. *Bloodreal* is a collection of short stories and op-ed pieces by Robinson that appear to be heavily autobiographical and sometimes very creepy. Throughout the book, he vents about an unrequited love named Julie (who I hope is safe wherever she is), his “mama” ruining his life, and people calling him fat. It’s mostly interesting to read, for a little while anyway. Eventually, the book turns into a series of top ten lists about Cheech and Chong movies and who his favorite pro wrestlers are, which is where he might lose readers who aren’t too interested in those topics. I hope this book does really well and begins

a trend of authors adapting funny monikers, like Dangerous David Sedaris or Radical Richard Dawkins. Fingers crossed. —Andy Conway (Sisyphus Press, PO Box 10495, State College, PA)

Demons in the Spring

By Joe Meno, 272 pgs.

I’m a good person to review this latest short story collection by Joe Meno because I’m very familiar with his work. I’ve read all of his novels and both of his short story collections. I even teach his first short story collection, *Bluebirds Used to Croon in the Choir*, in one of my freshman-level English courses. So I have an in-depth knowledge of his works and a real understanding of where *Demons in the Spring* fits into his oeuvre. I’m a bad person to review Meno’s work because Joe is a friend of mine and I recognize a few of the stories in this book from tours he and I have done together. This made me predisposed to like the book before I even started it. With that grain of salt thrown into my review, I feel comfortable saying that this is my favorite work by Joe so far. I like his short story collections better than his novels. I don’t say this to slag his novels. I just mean to say that, while his short stories share the rich language, endearing characters, and depth of emotion that his novels have, his stories also tend to go further into the realm of imagination than his novels do. This free flow of imagination is best exemplified in the story “The Sound before the End of the World,” where a police officer and a member of the KISS Army had to escape the black hole swallowing his town. (And, I know, KISS is lame; they should only be mentioned while ridiculing them. I know. Part of me wishes Meno picked on KISS more. The other part of me is content to know he didn’t take a bunch of easy shots.) The story reflects a delicate balancing act between a clever concept and heartfelt characters. Most writers can’t walk this fine line. Joe’s balance is tight. He also plays with form more in his stories, as evidenced by the choose-your-own-adventure story “What a Schoolgirl You Are” and the extremely clever “Iceland Today,” which initially appears as a Wikipedia-type entry on Iceland, but it goes so much deeper. And sometimes what I like best about Joe’s short stories is the way he draws me

into madness, captivates me, and ends the story without really letting me go, as he does with “Ghost Plane.” I wish I had some negative criticism of Joe’s prose so that I could balance this review out a little more, but I really don’t. It’s a tight short story collection. I highly recommend it. Each story is accompanied by the work of a different artist. I’m not as crazy about the artwork, but I’m also not going to pretend to be an art critic. The cover price is a bit high for a paperback (\$17.95). Some of the proceeds go to a nonprofit tutoring center in Chicago. —Sean Carswell (Akashic Books, PO Box 1456, NY, NY 10009)

Firebrands: Portraits from the Americas

By Justseeds Artists’ Cooperative; ed. Shaun Slifer and Bec Young, 192 pgs.

A diverse group of people are portrayed in this collection of biographies. The focus is on the same sort of under-appreciated historical luminaries that Howard Zinn wrote about in *A People’s History of the United States*. Each of the seventy-eight people profiled are immortalized with a beautifully drawn portrait, a well-researched but concise biography, and a particularly memorable quote. The artists who put this together did an amazing job. —Lauren Trout (Microcosmpublishing.com)

Ghost Pine: All Stories True

By Jeff Miller, 248 pgs., \$16.95

Ghost Pine (and its previous incarnation, *Otaku*) is most likely—considering its near fifteen year history—one of the longest running “personal” zines still kicking around. What *Cometbus* is to Berkeley and the East Bay, Jeff Miller’s *Ghost Pine* is to Sainte Catherine and Canada as a whole. And where most zines are considered long in the tooth if they make it past three or four issues, and even fewer manage to actually be consistently good, the fact that Miller has published for so long is laudable. But while zines like *Cometbus* are often championed for a kind of over-the-top bombast

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and punk excess, *Ghost Pine* works in the opposite way—quietly but convincingly, laying down small, true stories that put forth as much comfort as they do conviction. I’m glad Miller has found publishers willing to put this book out; the zine’s a good one, and the quiet, resolute strength of the writing translates well to book form.

Still, it’s interesting: Aesthetically, zine anthologies have always run into problems when faced with the dilemma of being published in book format. While I’m certainly no expert on *Ghost Pine*, I remember *Otaku* as being a scrappy, cut-and-paste affair with typewritten paragraphs, stark black and white graphics and (if I remember right) a quarter-sized format. Stuff like this doesn’t really matter to anyone but zine nerds, but I find the decision to ditch *Ghost Pine*’s cut and paste aesthetic for a more readable, text-only format an interesting one. Ditching the graphics and the well-worn typewriter aesthetic may have been a difficult decision.

Ultimately, though, it’s for the best—with no visual accompaniment to the collection, we’re looking at nothing but pages upon pages of short autobiographical blasts from Miller. Just page after page of these short, short stories—including ones published in other zines—with no discernable order,

about her species’ no-bullshit take on life. The professor comes to admire her clan and wishes that he could join them.

The format of this book reminded me of one of my favorite novels, *Ishmael* by Daniel Quinn. Both books are essentially a long conversation between a human character and a non-human character that results in the human adopting a new perspective on the human experience.

In some ways, it seems like the author, J. Stanton, wrote this book to drive home an anti-civilization message that many young punks would be receptive to. The Gnolls care about survival and hunting and they shun any other “needless complications,” such as personal possessions, intimate relationships, and permanent settlements. The last sentence of the Gnoll Credo is “die biting the throat,” which is sort of their way of saying “live fast, die young.” The benefits of living with this mentality are that the Gnolls have evolved to have superhuman strength and speed, and that their species is predicted to survive well past the end of humanity. However, Stanton doesn’t totally romanticize their lifestyle. It’s clear that the Gnolls are missing out on art and music. Their communication skills and hygienic knowledge are seriously lacking. Due to their intense existence, a Gnoll’s lifespan is only about thirty years. Obviously, it’s not the most glamorous

“It’s often these small moments stacked on top of each other that shape us just as much, and possibly more so, than the huge, calamitous ones.”

—Keith Rosson, *Ghost Pine: All Stories True*

chronologically or otherwise. As someone who cut his teeth during the same era of punk as Miller did, on the same records and the same scene, reading about his take on all things hardcore and DIY was fascinating and the definite high point of the book. His calm reflections on suburban life, musings on small Canadian towns and frozen, snow-blasted wanderings down midnight streets carried with them a certain flair that was familiar—this is a personal zine, after all—but also brought with them Miller’s particular voice.

Point is, the guy can write, and he can write well. Whether he’s describing minute details about a winter night in some far-flung, wind-shocked suburb, or the vendors surrounding a crowded subway platform, or even if he’s broadly reminiscing about the ever-changing and fractious nature of the cities and places he loves, Miller repeatedly does what zine writers are supposed to do: he brings us into his world. He takes us where he’s been and where he’s going. He does it cleanly and elegantly and with just the right amount of wistfulness; his sentimentality never becomes cloying. Above all, it’s his elegance that carries him through—ultimately, nothing much happens in the collection, but Miller writes with such respect and love about all of his subjects (wheelchair-bound grandfathers, road-weary friends, gay cookbook-schlepping bosses, entire cities) that it doesn’t matter. The guy writes with care. Less about ideas and more about the personal grace with which we can walk through the world, the *Ghost Pine* anthology works best as a dedication to the small moments in a life. As the book showcases, it’s often these small moments stacked on top of each other that shape us just as much, and possibly more so, than the huge, calamitous ones. Well done. —Keith Rosson (Invisible Publishing, 2578 Maynard St., Halifax NS, B3K 3V5, Canada)

Gnoll Credo, The

By J. Stanton, 178 pgs.

A work of fiction set in an unknown time and place, where humans live fearfully close to roaming packs of hyena-man hybrids called Gnolls. In this fantasy world, little is known about the Gnolls because anyone who has seen the intelligent but uncivilized creatures has not lived to tell about it. Humans live in dread of these creatures that seem to kill humans at random, so people are shocked when a university professor announces his intention to go into the Gnoll territory to conduct research on the clan. He meets a female Gnoll who can speak English and, upon request, presents him with a manifesto of sorts, called the Gnoll Credo. The list provides a look into the Gnolls’ mindset; starting off with “We are born and we die. No one cares, no one remembers, and it doesn’t matter. This is why we laugh.” From there, the professor spends as much time with his new friend as possible to learn more

way to live. By making it apparent that the Gnolls do not have an ideal life, I feel like Stanton is saying that humans could learn something from the Gnolls, as opposed to suggesting that humans need to go back into the caveman era and stay there.

At times, it did feel like I was being beaten over the head with “the message,” while reading this book. I tried to ignore all that and just enjoy the book as a well-written piece of fiction, to wait and reflect on the book’s themes until after I was done reading. That worked well for me. There is enough action and drama for it to be an interesting book at face value. But, of course, you’ll eventually start wondering if the Gnolls have gotten something right, which makes it a great book. —Lauren Trout (100 Watt Press, PO Box 10897, Zephyr Cove, NV 89448)

Please Take Me off the Guest List

By Nick Zinner, Zachary Lipez and Stacy Wakefield, 116 pgs.

This short book consists of a handful of brief writings by Zachary Lipez, photos by Nick Zinner (many taken during his travels with his band Yeah Yeah Yeahs), and layout by Stacy Wakefield. The book itself has glossy pages with color photos courtesy of Zinner and inserted every few pages are Lipez’s stories, making this something like a book within a book. I like the idea—it makes for a good venue for Zinner’s vibrant, unique and, at times, amusing photos (the raccoon coming out of the bushes and the mouse living in the toilet are two of my favorites)—and Wakefield’s layout is superb. Everything from the paper stock and fonts chosen to the actual concept of the book within a book and how that flows with Zinner’s photos is intelligent and smooth.

But where *Please Take Me off the Guest List* fails is with the written content. Lipez’s stories tell the tale of a thirty-something New York City hipster who sleeps with different women, hates his bookstore job, does cocaine, and half-heartedly follows heavy metal. In other words, he comes off as a pretentious, shallow human being whose stories—if they are true—make him a very unsympathetic character. While Lipez’s writing style may seem to be similar in some ways to someone like Al Burian in the whole mope-ish slacker feel, Burian has insights into his life that often carry over into the world of the reader in a sometimes humorous, sometimes poignant, manner. Lipez doesn’t share these with the reader, instead he writes of things to which only a handful of individuals might relate, which causes him to come off seeming like a mope-ish slacker but without many redeeming qualities.

Indeed, Lipez describes himself and his writing better than I ever could. “I have never, in any real sense, suffered... I grew up in a state of privileged

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irritation. I suckled on a tit of Brie and always had an unkind word for the school janitor. Truly, I was a shit" (p. 80). And you know what? That's okay. There are lots of punks who grew up in privilege, but even a lot of them are giving the dog a bone in regards to their creations. You gotta give me something here, Zachary. Instead, what I'm finding is some great layout work, a mixture of interesting, humorous, and some slightly dull photos interspersed with lackluster tales. —Kurt Morris (Akashic Books, PO Box 1456, NY, NY 10009)

Touch and Go: The Complete Hardcore Punk Zine '79-'83

By Tesco Vee and Dave Stimson, Edited by Steve Miller, 546 pgs.

For those unaware, *Touch and Go* was a highly influential zine published from 1979 until 1983 in Lansing, Michigan. The zine was authored by Tesco Vee—perhaps best known as the vocalist of the Meatmen—along with partner Dave Stimson and covered the nascent punk scene of the Midwest along with the authors' choice musical excursions to New York City and

"If Vee and Stimson thought something stunk, they were more than happy to say so." —Garrett Barnwell, *Touch and Go: The Complete Hardcore Punk Zine '79-'83*

Straight Edge: Clean-Living Youth, Hardcore Punk, and Social Change

By Ross Haenfler, 248 pgs.

Ross Haenfler was active in the straight edge community for over seventeen years and is now a professor of sociology. It helps to know both of those things before you pick up this book because they frame the entire reading experience. Since he came out of the straight edge scene, Haenfler is well-versed in all the details, contradictions, and debates within straight edge. He is both a vocal champion and sharp critic of the scene, and that gives his discussion of hardcore punk a depth that is usually not found in more journalistic, cookie-cutter coverage (Steven Blush, I'm giving the stink eye to you). For example, Haenfler offers informed discussions on some of the debates in the straight edge community around tolerance and militancy regarding alcohol use, veganism, and spirituality. He also offers two chapters on the issue of masculinity and gender in straight edge, in which he grapples with one of the fundamental contradictions of straight edge: its claim to be anti-sexist while reinforcing societal norms with the almost complete lack of female musicians and the promotion of hyper-masculine symbols and behaviors. As an insider, Haenfler also offers engaging insights into the tension between straight edge's promotion of individuality and self-expression, on the one hand, and conformity, close-mindedness, and intolerance among some participants, on the other hand.

But Haenfler is a sociologist and this book is, first and foremost, an academic book. Fortunately, he is a good sociologist and provides excellent interview material to support his claims. There are some interviews with bands and the occasional quoting of lyrics, but most of the interviews are with individual fans and ex-participants, which is refreshing and informative. He also spends a great deal of time quoting other academics at length, engaging in debates that you might not have much interest in: Is straight edge a subculture or a social movement? What is a subculture? What is a social movement? I'm an academic myself, so I can hang with him in the sections dominated by jargon-riddled prose, but I found his claim that straight edge is both a subculture (never adequately defined, by the way) and a social movement a little bit of an unoriginal copout. But his arguments about why straight edge is important socially and politically are convincing. Either way, this is definitely the best book about the straight edge movement I've come across. —Kevin Dunn (Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick, NJ)

Washington DC, along with as many record reviews as they could stuff in. The zine's spinoff record label is still around today, albeit in a reduced capacity, after having released a catalog of some of the most seminal modern music of the last twenty-five-plus years.

This book collects every issue in one softbound volume with some commentaries and gig flyers from the area/period thrown in for good measure. Reading through this today, one is struck by the brutal honesty and sheer passion in which the authors presented their material. While many zines of the period attempted to remain fairly impartial and even patronizing at times, if Vee and Stimson thought something stunk, they were more than happy to say so.

I particularly enjoyed reading their record and show reviews. The desperation captured in many of them totally took me back to the era when you would actually endure going to see a totally lame band simply because there was nothing else to do. The authors displayed a rather wide taste in music as well. Reading a review for Black Flag alongside a review for a Modern English record wasn't uncommon in *T&G*.

Their interviews were not really their strong point, so don't expect any revelations from any of the parties interviewed.

As far as the reprint itself there are some problems, as one might expect. Some of the pages cut off at the bottom or don't jump to the right page and some of the type is illegible. Considering this stuff was pulled from a cut and copy zine from some thirty years ago, this is hardly a problem.

I do have one small issue though, and that is the use of the word "complete," as it refers to the complete zine being reprinted. I actually owned an original zine as well as a best-of issue that was published sometime in the mid-eighties that both contained Meatmen comics similar to the art used on the *We're the Meatmen... And You Suck!* record, which are sadly not included in this book. Likewise, there are some pictures on some pages that don't seem chronologically correct and seem to indicate that some content got replaced during the editing.

That said, this book is still highly recommended for anyone interested in the late '70s-early '80s Midwest punk and hardcore scenes, as well as general zine lovers. At \$29.95 the book may seem a bit overpriced, but as a historical document it's priceless. Now if only *Flipside* would get the archival book treatment... —Garrett Barnwell (Bazillion Points Books, 61 Greenpoint Ave. #108, Brooklyn, NY 11222)



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Shutdown: The Rise and Fall of Direct Action to Stop The War: DVD

Direct Action to Stop the War (DASW) was a loose-knit coalition group that essentially shut down the financial district of San Francisco after the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Made up of interviews, brief explanations of organizing structures, and a whole lot of fascinating footage of the protest itself, *Shutdown* serves as a kind of homage to and dissection of both the effectiveness and problems facing the group. It's a quick, informative, self-analyzing, and humble film.

On March 20th, 2003, there were literally millions of people throughout the world protesting the invasion. The invasion itself had long-since become inevitable—U.S. forces had been amassing in neighboring Pakistan for months. (Many would say it was inevitable the moment planes crashed into the towers of World Trade Center—still others would say that was nothing but a catalyst.) Still, the day of March 20th served as the single largest mass-mobilized demonstration in history. It was protest on a global scale. *Shutdown* does a good job of looking at the momentum and fury of that time, the sense of helplessness that so many people felt, and how a loose-knit group of organizations, unions, radical groups, and civic clubs were able to work together in an attempt to be heard.

The film's greatest qualities are two-fold: its brevity and its humility. You never feel overwhelmed (or worse, bored) by the information being

"Highly recommended, not just for fans of Sid Vicious or punk rock, but for people who like murder mystery/unsolved crime newsmagazine TV shows." –Andy Conway, *Sid Vicious: Final 24: His Final Hours*

presented, and it's great to see the organizers of DASW willing to criticize themselves. It was also refreshing to see the inclusion of a multitude of people of different ethnicities, orientations, genders, and *agendas* all coming together to create something that turned out to be incredibly effective. Made up of dozens of disparate activist groups (or unions or close-knit groups of friends or campus clubs or whatever), the people interviewed in *Shutdown* were the ones directly involved with the group; it was great to see critical analysis rather than shit-talking about various factions and sub-sects, something that could have easily made its way into the film.

And yet it's also this disparate, far-spanning range of people involved that made it virtually impossible to keep DASW going after the initial shutdown of downtown San Francisco. With all of these different groups with different (some of them *very* different) agendas, it became much more difficult to come up with a forward-moving *plan* after the initial shutdown was achieved... and yet the war raged on and on. Some groups believed in direct action and lockdowns, some groups believed in dancing and block parties. Who was right? Everyone had different goals. How did they move forward when no one necessarily agreed on what forward even *was*? The group eventually splintered and disbanded, fell apart.

Yet while various members of DASW were critical of themselves and the problems with the group as a whole, maybe a lot of that is unnecessary in the sense that forming and then disbanding is the very nature of organizing. Its elasticity is what oftentimes makes organizing such a powerful tool. The various factions of DASW got together, formed something larger and wonderfully dynamic and powerful that performed this tangible thing (shutting down the financial section of one of the largest cities in the United States and giving people a platform to protest a war they viewed as unjust and wrong), and then they disbanded. Poof. Fucking incredible. The self-criticism of the group was great, but recognizing that DASW achieved its initial goal and that disbanding afterwards was maybe the right thing to do shouldn't necessarily be discounted.

Like I said, the video is smart and critical—and it was so refreshing to see that all the potential for shit-talking and criticism was negated by the fact that the people criticizing were the ones that were directly involved. It's that kind of accountability that comes across as so refreshing (and rare!) in radical politics, amongst all of the infighting and shit-talking. —Keith Rosson (AK Press, 674-A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612-1163)

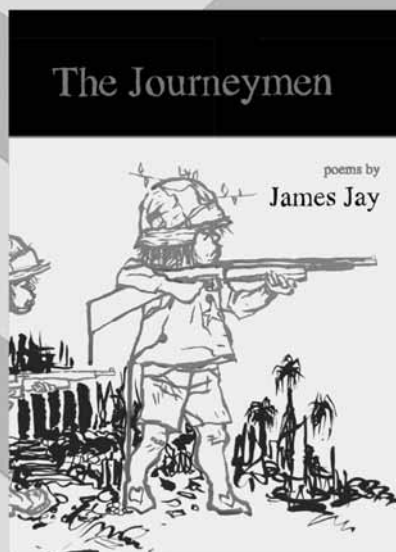
Sid Vicious: Final 24: His Final Hours: DVD

The last 24 hours in the life of Sid Vicious have always been shrouded in mystery. Many, like myself, just assumed he quietly cleaned his apartment, did Sudoku puzzles, and made tofu pad thai for dinner. Either that, or he did heroin and puked for 24 hours. Out on bail on charges of murdering his girlfriend Nancy Spungeon (of which he has no recollection) and accompanied by his crazy-ass enabler mom, Sid was on his last legs and facing his inevitable demise. What could he have been thinking? What ultimately lead to his death? Did he tell anyone to "Piss off!" in a funny Cockney British accent? Thankfully, this documentary DVD provides the answers to these probing questions.

This is fantastic stuff, extremely well produced (it originally aired on the Discovery Channel in Canada) and filled with firsthand accounts from the likes of former Sex Pistol Glen Matlock, Sid's lawyer, and even the late Pistol manager/Svengali himself, Malcolm McLaren. It also includes some great clumsily acted dramatizations, which you know you want to see. The British voiceover guy was my personal favorite part of this though, as he makes lines like "his mum bought his heroin" sound pleasant and soothing. Highly recommended, not just for fans of Sid Vicious or punk rock, but for people who like murder mystery/unsolved crime newsmagazine TV shows. —Andy Conway (MVD Entertainment Group, MVDB2B.com)

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